

CURRENT NOTES

Your Monitor on the World of ATARI

Vol. 12, No. 8

October 1992

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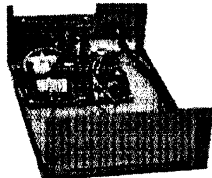
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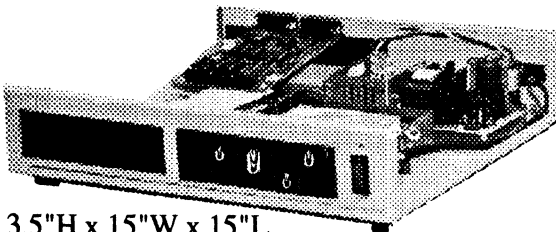
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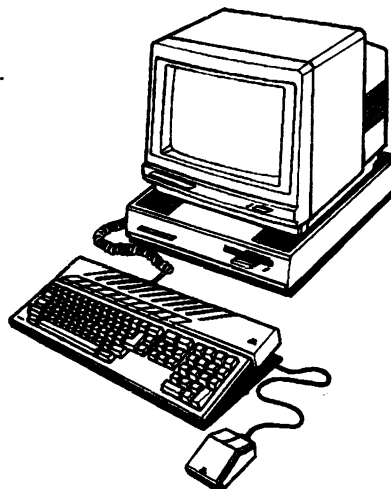
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ATARI SHOW ANNOUNCEMENTS

October 10 – 11: The WAACE Atarifest '92

The largest east coast Atarifest will be held, once more, at the Sheraton—Reston Hotel, 11810 Sunrise Valley Dr, Reston VA 22091 from 10am – 6pm Saturday and Sunday. For more information contact Charles Hoffmann at 703-629-6734.

October 24: Atari Safari '92

The Houston Atari Computer Enthusiasts are sponsoring their third annual computer show, the largest show in Texas and surrounding States. The show will be held at the Houston Marriott Astrodome, 2100 South Braeswood from 10 am to 5 pm, October 24th. Atari Safari '92 will feature guest speakers Bob Brodie, The CodeHeads, and the Double Click guys, and a demonstration of "The Link" by ICD. Admission is \$3 (pre-teens are free). Vendor and user group information: HACE, PO Box 460212, Houston, TX 77056-8212, or call Harold Galley (713) 988-4772 for more information.

November 16 – 20: Fall COMDEX

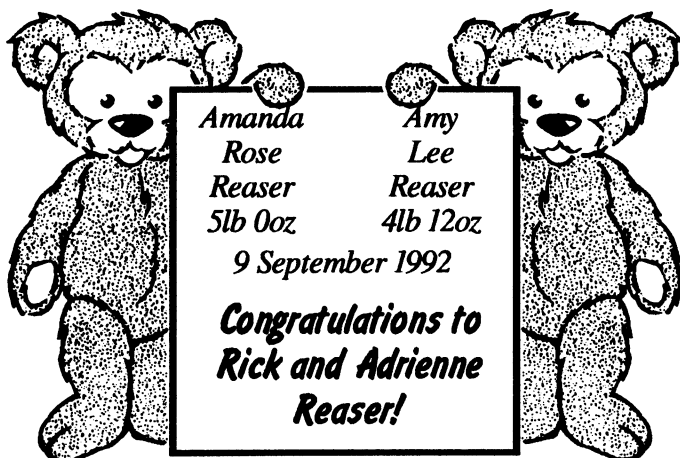
The biggest computer trade show in the USA is held, once more, in Las Vegas, Nevada. Atari will, once again, have a major presence at the show where the Falcon will dominate the Atari booth providing outstanding demonstrations for the dealer and distributor attendees.

December 12 – 13: No. CA Atari Expo

»»»»»CANCELLED«««««

We regret to announce that due to a number of ongoing problems with regards to scheduling and commitments the Northern California Atari Expo has been cancelled. There are currently no plans to reschedule the show in the near future.

If you would like to see your event announced in "Atari Show Announcements," send relevant information to Current Notes, 122 N. Johnson Rd, Sterling, VA 20164. Send electronic mail to JOE.WATERS on GENie or to 74005,1270 on CompuServe.



The cover: First public showing of the new Atari Falcon030 computer is at the Dusseldorf Atari Meese in Germany. Photo by Atari Corp.

MOVING?

Don't forget to send in a change of address notice if you are moving. *Current Notes* is distributed via second class US mail. The post office does not forward second class publications; they throw them away.

From the Editor's Desk

by Joe Waters

A new era is launched. Atari has introduced the Falcon030. You'll find a lot of information about the Falcon in this issue. Olive Steinmeier gives *CN* his personal account of the Falcon unveiling in Dusseldorf, Germany. You'll find the transcript from Bill Rehbock's CompuServe conference on the Falcon. We have Atari's "official" U.S. press release from the Boston introduction of the Falcon. And Dave Troy, as well as some other columnists, add their comments on the new Atari Falcon030.

Right now, this new "era" remains, like much of computing, a bit of a mystery. How "new" and "neat" is the Atari Falcon030? We don't know yet. We can read what Atari officials say, but few "users" have yet to get their hands on a Falcon030 and put it to the test. That will come. In time, we will see what the new Falcon can do and just how wonderful it is, or is not. In terms of plain old computing power, the competition goes faster, can have as many colors, and is often cheaper. But, Atari has added some new and exciting possibilities to this machine that may make it much more than a simple home computer. Atari is announcing the Falcon as a "Personal Integrated Media" machine with capabilities far beyond what other traditional "computers" in this price range can do. Of course, the Falcon doesn't do anything without software. But, if the software is there and the mass market decides it can't live without this new toy, Atari may have a hit on its hands and all Atarians will be happy.

Many Atari fans are optimistic that the Falcon will be a great new beginning, but having observed Atari for many years, quite a few are, at best, cautiously optimistic. Some are even pessimistic, not so much about the Falcon, but about Atari Corp. These are hard times for any company in the "computer" business and the challenges facing Atari are not to be taken lightly. Personally, I am anxious to see a Falcon in action. I am hoping it will be a machine "I can't live without!"

Meanwhile, to give some perspective to this new, unknown, era we are entering, I thought I would delve back into the *CN* archives and see what the hot topics were five years ago, in October 1987. I was a little surprised by all the interesting things that were the focus of Atarian attention not too long ago. Let's go back to the beginning of a different era...

The Mega ST4 was just introduced. That was the first issue of *CN* produced on a Mega ST4 and we had an indepth look, inside and outside, at Atari's newest computer. Bruce Noonan gave us a programmer's view of the new Mega ST4 and sent the first "GEM" version of his *STWriter* program to the *CN* Library.

The new Atari laser printer was another new, exciting option, which, Frank Sommers reported in his "ST Update" column, would start shipping in the states by December 1. Bob

Kelly, in his "Atari Scuttlebits" column, reported that Paine-Webber had issued an updated analysis of Atari: "We believe that ATC stock offers some of the best upside potential over the next 6-10 months of any computer we follow. We reiterated our buy (1)." The (1) rating was exceptional, but Paine-Webber felt that the new 2 and 4 megabyte computers, the soon-to-be-released IBM-PC clones, the laser printer, and the new game machine would significantly increase domestic and international sales.

Dave Small presented part 2 of his story about Nicholas Tesla, "The World's Greatest Hacker." M. Evan Brooks wrote his last "Battle Bytes" column. Old time readers will remember well Evan's excellent, detailed monthly reviews and analysis of 8-bit war games. But, with a diminishing 8-bit market, war game developers were shifting to the IBM clone market; software for the Atari 8-bit was no longer being developed.

Speaking of 8-bits, that issue saw the second installment of "Pieces of Eight," a new monthly column offered by *CN*'s new 8-bit editor, Len Poggiali. Jeff Greenblatt's "Adventures in the Magic Sack" informed readers about the imminent release of "The Translator" from Data Pacific. This device would convert ST disk drives into Mac drives from which the *Magic Sac* could read Macintosh disks directly.

Avant-Garde was advertising *pc-ditto*, the software IBM emulator for the ST and Bill Price completed the second in his two-part series on MS-DOS on the ST. Applied Computer Associates was advertising a color 1040ST for \$895. Word Perfect Corp and Logical Design Works had full page ads for their Atari products, *WordPerfect* and *LDW Basic*. And, of course, we had lots of reviews: *The First XLent Word Processor*, *Ace of Aces*, and *Wargame Construction Set* for the XL/XE) and *Bridge 5.0*, *Cyber Studio*, *DeskCart!*, *Discache*, *GFL Championship Football*, *Gridiron*, *MathTalk Fractions*, *Prohibition*, *R.A.I.D.*, *Roadwar 2000*, *Sea Combat*, *ST Chess*, *UltraCalc*, and *WordWriter ST* for the ST line.

Georgia Weatherhead, the president of the Northern Virginia Atari Users Group, previewed the events planned for the upcoming WAACE Atarifest to be held in Fairfax High School. Included in the list of events was an evening "Banquet" at the Holiday Inn, the first banquet held at a WAACE Atarifest, where John Skruch, VP of Atari, was the featured speaker.

And that's the way it was, in the World of Atari, five years ago this month. It was a very exciting time and Atarians were optimistic about the future. I wonder how this issue will look to *CN* readers five years from now, in October 1997?

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Letters to the Editor

SpartaDOS-X Comments

Dear Joe,

I noticed a couple of comments in the September issue of CN concerning my SpartaDOS-X toggle switch article, which appeared in the June 1992 issue, and would like to clarify some points.

In Richard L. Reaser's 8-Bit Tidbits article on page 42 of the September issue, he includes an exchange between himself, Jeff McWilliams, and myself on GENIE. Jeff thought it much simpler to use the COLD /CN command to boot *AtariWriter Plus*, and then go through a couple of disk swaps, boot SpartaDOS 3.2D, run XON.COM from that disk, and then put your next program disk that you want to use into the drive and boot it after SDX is turned back on.

Well, that works OK for *AtariWriter Plus*, and probably quite a few other AUTORUN program disks, but not for everything you're going to encounter. Sooner or later, you'll wind up having to remove the SDX cartridge in order to get a program to boot.

The SDX manual offers several suggestions on booting AUTORUN files, including renaming the AUTORUN.SYS file, and then typing X followed by the new name. But for that type of file, why not just type X AUTORUN.SYS instead of renaming it? And what if it is a copy protected disk that you can't write to in order to rename the file? Back to unplugging SDX! Most commercial AUTORUN program disks (*Paper Clip*, for example) don't even have readable directories, so there is no way to rename them.

Some programs still won't boot even if you try the above procedures. *Rails West* by SSI has an AUTORUN.SYS file that, in turn, runs a BASIC program called OPENING. If you try the COLD /CN route, the computer just returns a READY prompt after loading this short AUTORUN.SYS file, and then locks up if you try going to BASIC to run OPENING.

My intention with the toggle switches was to totally eliminate all incompatibility problems, continual

removal/insertion of the cartridge, and multiple disk swaps. I find it much simpler and faster to turn off the computer, flip two switches, and then turn it back on.

In Letters to the Editor, Ron Fetzer of Elmont, NY, encountered memory problems with his SDX modification. That has me completely stumped, because, as I mentioned in my original article, I have modified four SDX cartridges with complete success. My only suggestion to Mr. Fetzer is: double-check your wiring, and insure that the two traces are completely severed. I removed about 1/16-inch of trace at the two cuts to eliminate all chance of capacitive reactance over the gap. If you have cut only a very narrow gap, try widening it, and check for solder bridges. Maybe you have marginally flaky RAM chips in your computer? What model computer are you using? I, and all of my Atari 8-bit friends who use SDX cartridges that I modified, have 130XEs. The SDX modification was not tested with any other model.

Charles A. Cole
GENIE: C.COL.EI
CIS: 73217,2321
Delphi: COL.ESHED

Request for DEKA Review

Dear Sirs,

Your publication is the best ST journal available. I also read and like *ST Informer*, but yours is somewhat more substantial and certainly classier.

The letters to the editor in the past two or three issues have been outstanding. The letter writers not only express themselves well, but have something to say.

I wish you would do a review of the new product, *DEKA*, from Wuznek. It is a small box that enables you to run an IBM keyboard from your MEGA (and I suppose from a regular ST also). It has places to plug in your mouse and joystick as well, I believe, as a place to plug in one of those optical readers for scanning code markings. Although I think the MEGA keyboard is much bet-

tern than the one on my previous 1040ST, I still would like a keyboard in which the distance between adjacent keys is not 3 cm as in the MEGA 2, but 6 or 7 cm as it is in all non-Atari keyboards. Typing would be more error-free.

You really have some outstanding regular contributors in Barnes, Wrotniak, Gunter, Sommers, Troy, and Small. However, there would be no CN if it were not for Mr. and Mrs. Joe Waters!

Sincerely,
Robert Hochwalt
North Canton, OH

[Many thanks for all the compliments; there are many people quick to complain, so the occasional "pat on the back" is always welcomed by our writers.

Well, how about it, readers? Does anyone have *DEKA*? If so, why not send in some thoughts on your experience and evaluation with the IBM keyboard replacement? After all, the articles you read each month are not written by professional correspondents. They are sent in each month by Atari owners, just like yourself, from all parts of the country (and other countries). If you'd like to help your fellow Atari owners, "just do it." We always appreciate receiving material from new authors and reviewers. —JW]

Concordance 3 - Wonderful!

Dear Current Notes,

The article on *Concordance 3* by Bruce d. Noonan, M.D. was a very interesting article. I read the article and then contacted the 15th Avenue Bible Church. The program is everything the article states. It is wonderful to be able to search easily, edit, and use the Greek Reference. I had a friend come over and evaluate the program. He uses an IBM and some other concordance program. He was very impressed by the quality of the program and the value of the program compared to what he had paid for the IBM version. I would encourage anyone interested in doing a Bible study or just wanting to learn more about the Bible to use this program. It is very good. Thank you for publishing the article.

Doug Edmonds
Philomath, OR

Double-Click Woes

Dear Editor,

I have written your magazine twice before concerning my efforts to get the

Double Click Software company to honor their agreements with me to update products I purchased and registered with them. Upon the specific instructions of Mr. Mike Verderman, I returned my original copy of *DC Desktop* along with \$3.00 for an update of a possibly defective copy of the software. I first wrote Double Click in September 1991, I have yet to receive any reply from anyone at Double Click and have not received the promised update of *DC Desktop*.

Since it was obvious Double Click was never going to respond to me, I notified the U.S. Postal Service, which is now handling the matter. I urge any of your readers who have experienced the same or similar problems with the Double Click Software company, to contact: M.B. Hamadch, Office of the Regional Chief Inspector, United States Postal Service, Memphis, TN 38161-0001. (201) 772-7700.

There is no room in the Atari community for a company which has such little regard for its customers. If we, as users, quietly accept this kind of treatment, we should expect no better.

Mike Marion
Northport, AL

[Michael Lee, in his "A Little of This, A Little of That" column in the August 21 issue of *ST Report* posts a message, reprinted below, from Mike Verderman, which might explain some of the problems customers have been experiencing. —JW]

From Michael Verderman of Double Click, Cat. 30, Topic 2, Message 153, *ST Roundtable* on GENie...

Sorry for the long delay on posting, folx... I recently had all of my computer equipment (and modems) zapped by a bad lightning storm and am in the process of getting it all restored. This is why the BBS is down, also. Currently, I'm using a friend's computer and modem to check here...

Now, let me give you a brief "scoop" on what is going on... I'm not trying to make excuses, and I'm certainly not very pleased at the way things have been occurring lately.

Briefly, at the beginning of the year, both my partners decided that they wanted out of the Atari market, which left me holding the ball of wax on everything. I found a new partner in San Diego, and we entered into a preliminary agreement to test the "waters" and

see if the new partnership would work out... I, personally, have a full-time job now (have for the past year), which means my time has been reduced drastically from what it was during the first part of 1st year (yes, I previously worked for DC full-time).

Anyway, as part of the new partnership, all work was going to be handled out of SD. I have no manuals, originals, files, or anything in Houston. However, my new partner seems to have many other interests, and has not been tending to the necessary business. On Monday of this week, I called up and left a message to the effect of: It's not working, send everything back to Houston. I've been unable to contact my "partner" for several weeks now, and don't even know if he got the message on Monday.

So, I sincerely apologize for the lack of responsiveness of late. I accept full responsibility, and hope to have DC back on track as soon as I get the supplies and files back here... Let's just say this is a lesson learned.

I hope to have good news for everyone ASAP. In the meantime, again, please accept my apologies.

He wants CD-ROMs!

Dear CN Library,

How about a "summer PD sale"? I need to stock up on clip art and utilities.

With Gemulator, will you be able to put out CDs with the PD library on them??

Falcon better be good; I've been hanging in with Atari since '80 but this CD crap makes "ATARI" more uncompetitive than any other single feature! I'm not a "power" user, therefore, I don't care about nanosecond performance, but being locked out of the CD deal is too much.

P.S. I have close to 400 music CD's, collected over the last eight years. (I was in Consumer Electronics and got one of the first CD players to hit the country.) A local retail chain is advertising a CD-ROM (Mac or IBM) reader/player and all the CD's (a dozen) for just over \$400. Just my 2 cents!

Gene O'Neil
Eugene, OR

[A summer sale sounds like a good idea; in fact, we just had one; I hope you spotted it in the July/August issue. CN will not put out its library on a CD-ROM disc. There currently is an early version of the

CN library (up to disks in the mid-300 numbers) available, but that was produced by a third party. The equipment to master a CD-ROM tape, with up to 600MB of information, is relatively expensive and the process of making the master would be very time consuming. And, of course, there would be very few people who owned both an Atari and a CD-ROM drive for the Atari.

The Falcon, by itself, won't solve the CD-ROM dilemma. However, the Falcon does have a "processor direct" slot and there are plans for a 386 chip to make the Falcon IBM compatible. If that happens, then, if you had a SCSI CD-ROM drive, it might work. I say "might" because the IBM emulation package has not yet been announced. Note that IBM emulation is critical. Few, if any, CD-ROM products are written to run off an Atari computer. Even Mac owners find their choices very limited. The CD-ROM market belongs to the mainstream PC world. So, only time will tell if Atari computers can be used to tap into the CD-ROM market. —JW]

Send LETTERS TO THE EDITOR to CN Letters, 122 N. Johnson Rd, Sterling, VA 20164.

(E-mail to GENie: JOE.WATERS; CIS: 74005,1270)



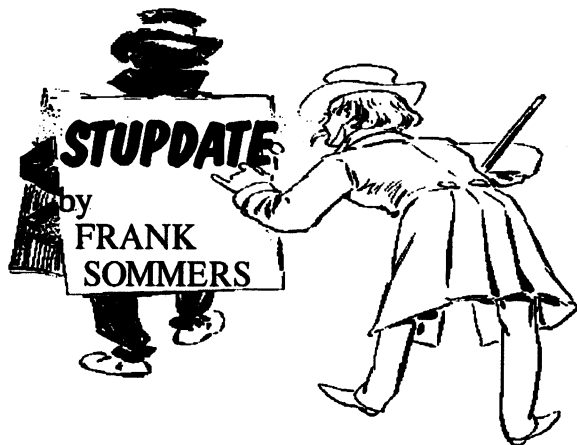
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TRIALS & TRIBULA- TIONS OF THE AMIGA, CAN COMMO- DORE PULL IT OFF? CAN ATARI?

*The following may remind
some CN readers of an
Update column of last
December....*

(The following is a replay of an article by Philip Robinson, editor for "Virtual Information" of Sausalito, California that appeared in the Washington Post, Business Section.)

There are a lot of unhappy Commodore Amiga owners in the world.

Many are unhappy with Commodore International, bitter that the company has not supported them. Many are unhappy with me for my recent column stating that "The Amiga is dead."

That column provoked more reaction than any other of the hundreds of articles I've written. This column is my follow-up, my thoughts after talking to and corresponding with scores of Amiga owners, fans, dealers, bulletin-board operators, user-group presidents, magazine publishers, former employees, current employees, executives, former dealers, technicians, software developers and at least one lunatic.

First, I want to apologize for the oft-misread line "The Amiga is dead." I've heard from Amiga owners and dealers all over who thought this meant "Commodore has stopped making and selling the Amiga."

Not true. And I didn't mean to suggest that Commodore is making Amigas and planning future Amigas and it thinks my criticisms are all wet. I didn't mean to imply the Amiga was no longer available, just that its life as a viable competitor to PC's and Macintoshes was over.

Now to the "input" I've had.

First came applause—calls and E-mail telling me "thank God somebody finally said it" and "you hit the nail on the head—I've had an Amiga for years and suffered so much from Commodore's mixed-up marketing and neglect" and "Great work—I hope this gives Commodore the swift kick ... they need." These folks thought I "had done a service to mankind" by saving others from their fate. Who am I to argue?

Then came a call from Commodore, understandably upset. Why didn't I have the "common courtesy" to find out about its plans before writing such a wrong-headed piece? I tried to explain that its plans didn't mean much to me because too many computer analysts and reviewers spend too much time hobnobbing with company presidents.

Even when they don't automatically believe everything those executives say, the journalists end up seeing the computer world from the top, marketing, global, profit-and-loss point of view instead of from the bottom, I need-a-computer-to-get-my-job-done view. This tilt is made worse when you realize that the com-

puter writers don't know the real value of a computer dollar. They get all the latest and greatest for free.

Then came calls from dealers and owners. Several congratulated me, but most wanted a quick retraction for such "uniformed and very misleading" ignorance. And those were the nice ones. Some thought I had insulted them personally. One even suggested I die. Another criticized my "artificial eloquence." Maybe that's a compliment; I'm not sure.

I'm sorry if my article hurt sales at Amiga dealerships. Sorry for the dealers, that is. They're just trying to make a living. But that can hardly justify me hurting all those buyers out there who might have bought an Amiga and regretted it. That's my responsibility. Some of the dealers thought I was cruel to "kick the Amiga when it was down." My job is not to help sales, but direct readers.

The dealers did convince me of one thing. I may have been unfair to the Amiga 500.

Although Commodore sells with a game-machine emphasis in Europe, as a sort of European Nintendo, it can be a reasonable home computer for a U.S. household that wants games, graphics and some multimedia.

Next I began to get letters and calls from Amiga groups and bulletin-board members. Many of these read my column on-line: Someone had scanned it in and circulated it throughout the country. These calls were about 50-50: Some thought I was "so right" and some thought I was "biased and NASTY."

Finally, I had a conference call with Commodore's U.S. executives. They spoke of new Amigas coming in September at a "World of Commodore" show in Pasadena, CA, of a new custom chip set that would enhance the Amiga's already unique multimedia powers, of a commitment to multimedia and video, of a new advertising campaign, and of recent deals with Merisel Inc. and Digital Equipment Corp., which would resell Amigas. What does it add up to? Clearly, the Amiga is not gone. The Amiga is the premier desk-top video machine, particularly because of NewTek's Video Toaster. It is also a superb multimedia machine, for sound, animation and interactive presentations. And the Amiga 500 is a competitive home computer.

But I stand by my conclusions in the first article: You should buy an Amiga only if you're into video or multimedia. And even in those fields it now has competition from PCs and Macs. If Commodore carries through with its new development, sales, marketing and support plans, the Amiga may well pull back ahead in those areas.

Keep three things in mind when considering an Amiga:

- * Great Valley Products (for lots of peripherals and accelerators) and NewTek (for video) are the consensus picks for the best ways to improve the Amiga (lots of callers and writers mentioned them).
- * Commodore has built a huge reputation for disappointing Amiga owners. Not every Amiga owner feels this way, but many do. Some of them wrote to thank me for my column. But even the majority of those who called or wrote to condemn my column volunteered or admitted that—to paraphrase—"everyone knows Commodore has screwed up the marketing, the development, the support" of the Amiga. Dealers were left holding the bag when big marketing campaigns folded in months.
- * When you buy a computer, you're not just buying hardware and software to process words, calculate or whatever. You're also buying into a method for doing those things. That is, buy a PC and learn *WordPerfect*, and you'll have a skill that any company in the country will value.

But buy an Amiga and learn to use one of its word processors or spreadsheets, even if they offer fantastic powers equal to or, in some cases, better than PC or Mac counterparts, and you're not going to be accepted in the market.

You'll be ahead of someone with no computer experience, but behind those with PC or Mac time. These skills are more important than learning to program in BASIC, the computer literacy of a decade ago.

There is no 1-2-3 for the Amiga, no *Word* or *Excel* or *PageMaker*. There used to be a *WordPerfect*, but that company gave up on the Amiga market. That's why in my computer bookstore there are thousands of titles on Macs and PCs and only a dozen for the Amiga.

As Commodore points out, the Amiga is the second most popular computer in Europe, though many of those are sold as game machines.

The Amiga could still come into the main stream—but only if multimedia really catches on and if Commodore invests enough time and attention to it in the United States. (*Editors note: Try substituting Atari for Amiga and see how the above reads.*)

Miscellaneous

Fan's of the Richard Gunter column will note his plea in this issue for word on how he can cause *Publisher ST* to run again on his machine. When considering advising him, please understand this was the only way we could induce him to switch to *Calamus*.



Atari Introduces First Computer System Designed for Personal Integrated Media

*Atari Falcon030™ Brings
High-end Capabilities to the Market
for Less Than \$1,000.*

BOSTON (September 23, 1992) Atari Corporation today announced the first available personal integrated media system, the Atari Falcon030 computer. From education to entertainment, personal integrated media (PIM) has the potential to change consumers' lives as dramatically as personal computers changed business offices. The system will be available in November at authorized Atari dealers across the country.

A full scale computer based on the powerful 16 MHz Motorola 68030 microprocessor, the Atari Falcon030 is specifically designed for personal integrated media functions. It gives even inexperienced users the ability to combine and manipulate video, audio, animation, telecommunications, text and graphics. The system is optimized for these functions and incorporates technology usually reserved for high-end production systems.

"The Atari Falcon030 is an ideal entry to the new and growing personal integrated media market," said Sam Tramiel, Atari's president and CEO. "It's a powerful system that gives users access to a whole new world of applications. Yet the system remains easy-to-use and affordable."

Consumers will be able to use the Atari Falcon030 as a color video phone, communicating in sound and pictures with other Falcon users. The system makes it possible to create home videos complete with text and music, record lead vocals on a favorite rock'n'roll classic with the original musicians playing along; narrate and score a family photo album, produce a visual family tree, invent and play an adventure game set in a childhood home; and much more.

Atari Falcon030 users have immediate access to advanced PIM capabilities thanks to the following features:

- * Atari's graphic environment manager (GEM) and built-in graphics co-processor
- * A true color mode that includes more than 65,000 colors, twice the capability of the Apple Macintosh LCII
- * The industry's only standard-equipped MIDI input/output ports
- * 16-bit stereo sound-input and output-for the highest quality reproduction available at sample rates up to 50 kHz
- * Built-in composite and RF video outputs for easy connection to video cassette recorders

- * External video sync for high quality genlocking
- * Overlay mode for easy video titling and special effects
- * Software for PIM applications such as desktop video production, animation, music and entertainment

No other computer provides this level of performance and PIM capabilities at a more economical price.

Application Highlights

PIM technology will make thousands of new capabilities possible. There are already hundreds of software applications available for the Atari Falcon030, making it easy for users to accomplish a variety of new goals.

Movie Quality Video. With the Atari Falcon030, users can explore new avenues in home video, from inserting titles and credits to professional quality editing. They can create music videos, videos, cartoons and school presentations.

The Falcon offers state of the art graphics, true color 16-bit mode allowing up to 640x480 resolution and a display of up to 65,536 on-screen colors. It accepts external video sync for high quality genlocking, and uses a unique overlay mode for effortless titling and special effects. In addition, users can obtain composite video signals directly from the Falcon030.

High Quality Audio. Atari takes the music-industry standard--MIDI--one step further. The only company to provide MIDI as a standard system component, the Atari Falcon030 also incorporates Motorola's 56001 digital signal processor (DSP) for the highest quality audio and special effects capabilities, allowing users to remove lead vocals and create their own Karaoke machine or run music education programs.

The Atari Falcon030 provides users with features that are usually restricted to expensive, high-end machines. But without any additional equipment, Atari Falcon030 users can record on two stereo tracks and add graphic equalization and special effects such as surround sound, harmonizing, reverberation and echo.

Pricing and Availability

The Atari Falcon030 is a simple to use computer that doesn't require add-on-boards or other costly optional hardware. The Atari Falcon030 already includes exactly what users need. The machine offers a wealth

of ports for communicating with existing peripherals, and application software for the Atari Falcon030 is readily available.

Priced at \$799 with 1 MB of RAM, the Atari Falcon030 is ideal for users who want a powerful, efficient, and cost-effective tool that can take advantage of today's technologies. The system will be available in November through authorized Atari dealers.

Atari Corporation (AMEX:ATC) is a worldwide manufacturer and marketer of palmtop through desktop computer systems. The company sells its systems, peripherals and software through authorized distributors, resellers and integrators.

Atari Ships New Multitasking OS with Falcon030™

SUNNYVALE, CA (September 23, 1992) Atari Corporation announced today its new multitasking operating system, called MultiTOS. Available with the new Atari Falcon030 personal integrated media machine, the system will be available in November at Atari distributors around the country.

"We took advantage of our strong user network and made many of our upgrades based on input from dedicated Atari users and developers around the world," said Leonard Tramiel, vice-president of system software for Atari. "We designed the operating system around the way people use computers. I believe the level of attention to users, and the degree to which this operating system addresses those concerns, is unique in the industry. We've built in more options and flexibility and at the same time dramatically improved performance."

Immediate Pre-Emptive Multitasking Capabilities

Atari's MultiTOS is compatible with existing applications and upgrades from software developers are not required. Running on the Falcon030, MultiTOS takes advantage of the hardware memory protection built into Motorola's 68030. Users can confidently run a word processing program without quitting out of a database or electronic mail program first.

Unlike offerings from other personal computer manufacturers, Atari's MultiTOS is pre-emptive. The system doesn't have to wait for permission from one application before switching to another task. "Other multitasking systems may leave a user waiting indefinitely, until a calculation or manipulation is completed before changing to another application," said Tramiel. "But MultiTOS is more sophisticated and will switch between applications automatically."

The result is a true multitasking environment. Multiple applications can be left running in background windows as new tasks are started in the foreground window. A database program does not have to

complete its sort before the user changes windows into a word processor.

NewDesk™ Improved

In addition to the operating system enhancements, the graphic desktop NewDesk has also been upgraded.

New features include:

- * Animated, color icons
- * 3-D buttons and scroll bars
- * Manipulate and resize background windows
- * "Drag and drop" across applications
- * Extensible file system support
- * Use soft-loaded fonts
- * Hierarchical and pop-up menus

Font Scaling Manager

Word processing and desktop publishing users will be especially pleased with the addition of Font Scaling Manager (FSM). FSM makes it easy to view any font size by allowing applications to scale text to any point size. FSM also makes arbitrary font rotation and skewing possible, and allows direct manipulation of font characters' Bezier outlines for more advanced type effects.

MultiTOS will ship with the Atari Falcon030 available November 1992. Additionally, MultiTOS will soon be available as an upgrade to Atari's TT030™. Demonstrations can be seen at authorized dealers around the country.

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Be Excited About the Falcon! Another Valiant Shot at Appliance Status

(C) 1992 David C. Troy

In the history of the world there have been inventions, discoveries, and breakthroughs that revolutionized human behavior. The wheel, the automobile, the toaster oven, the light bulb, fire, the telephone, written laws, radio, flight, the IBM PC and processed cheese food are all worth mentioning.

All of these feats are born of the same ingredients: perceived need and available technology. They are begun in the basement of one man's heart, and when they emerge in a state of full marketability, the best of these ideas go on to multiply and multiply, until they are not questioned--finally becoming the habit of a million men. And so it goes for a breakthrough.

We see some incidental inventions, forged from either too little need, too little heart, or too little technology. These inventions are admired by some and fostered by others. But their fate is ultimately to be left up to the judge of time, and whether, through time, a true need in every man's heart develops.

The Atari 520ST, and all of its predecessors, are such incidental inventions. Ultimately, they were born doomed, because their makers didn't really believe they could succeed. We sit now, mired in eight years worth of aftermath, wondering where the need went, and wondering how we can do some coronary surgery.

Now, we see the Falcon 030. To many of us, it seems the machine is the second coming of the 520ST, coming back to revive a doomed platform. But the Tramiels no longer have their hearts in the busi-

ness of producing ST's; the mere fact that the Falcon is ST compatible is due solely to the folly of operating system ownership. The Falcon 030 is not a last technological gasp for a doomed technology. It is, rather, a hopeful new appliance, aimed not exclusively at us (as nearly every other introduction after the 520ST was), but at the zillions of people who could benefit from a multimedia computer. Should the appliance succeed, we could benefit greatly--as we've invested at the ground floor.

My musings come not from an internal wellspring, but from heart to heart conversing with those-whose-opinions-we-can-trust at Atari. I have learned that in the eyes of Atari, the Falcon030 is not the powerful gun we can use to force the relatively tiny computer-using population into buying Atari machines. And I think we all can agree that in this day and age, doing so is impractical. There needed to be a new angle. What could Atari make that people might actually WANT to buy?

Marshall McLuhan said that the message was the medium. And if that's true, multimedia must have multiple messages. If that's true, then a multimedia computer addresses multiple groups of people, which brings you closer to *everybody* than nobody. Cool. We've identified that a multimedia computer would be something that a group that approaches everybody might want. Can Atari build one? Yes. It's the Falcon 030. See how much easier this is when we throw the ST out the window?

So Atari builds a multimedia computer. Everything Atari knows about computer manufacturing came from building ST's. They own a custom operating system called TOS, which they're skilled at modifying. Is it any surprise, then, that when this computer is finished, it's equipped with two primary attributes: 1) multimedia capability and 2) ST compatibility? Not to me. But remember, this isn't an ST--it's Atari's best, most promising shot at a universal appliance yet!

Why Might the Falcon Catch on?

Just as the 1990's are the age of home video, the Falcon 030 is the ultimate value-priced home video manipulation tool. With true-color high-res video, you could use a Falcon 030 as a frame-by-frame video editor. You could use it for screen titling. It's also a better-than-CD-quality home recording studio, complete with audio inputs and outputs. It's cheap, and fast. And the 56K DSP offers potential to weave sound and video in ways no one has thought of yet.

The Falcon030 pushes buttons for the general public that they don't know they have. The Falcon allows people to express themselves artistically (through video and music), do "computer stuff," or do "educational stuff." The Falcon could also be a relatively cheap programmable sound-effects-processor (for Dolby surround sound type manipulations). Your average Pee-See can't do these tasks (realtime sound, video manipulation) for a reasonable amount of money. And neither can a Mac. Enter the Falcon

030, an integrated, out-of-the-box package that can do all that stuff, and more.

Many of the world's most successful "appliances" have been so right-on-the-money, so useful and so desperately needed by the collective world-psyche, that they are swept up almost before release into a windstorm of press, development, application, and good vibes. The automobile, the telephone, Disneyland, the Satanic Verses, et al. They're all permanent members of classic-dom, thanks to early recognition by the world's most distinguished citizens.

Atari is trying to seed such a windstorm now, by planting the Falcon at the BCS meeting this month. Comdex routinely is nothing more than a thousand manufacturers all pretending to be dead-certain that they have something worth billowing about. Only the public and the eccentric, deified higher-ups can judge. Atari will be there, making sure that everyone who matters is impressed. And perhaps, with a little bit of good luck, the Falcon 030 will be the product that "rocks Comdex." Maybe not.

Should such a title be bestowed on this fledgling machine, we can be assured of an *opportunity* for success. Attention from other companies may mean profitable long term partnerships. But again, the momentary hype will be lost quickly if not acted on immediately. We all know that if the Falcon is widely praised (which it will be), and if Atari fails to act within its window of opportunity, there will be yet another machine made by one of a myriad of competitors, right where the Falcon was positioned--on the threshold of greatness. So we are at a pivotal juncture. The Falcon is poised for success. We just have to hope that our four favorite Mr. T's are ready, able, and willing to gamble away at least some portion of their \$70,000,000 (yes, seventy million) cash reserves. And from what I've heard, they may well be willing, as they've got

their hearts behind this machine. As they should; this is a machine to believe in.

Again, any resemblance the Falcon 030 may bear to any Atari ST, living or dead, is purely coincidental. As we all know, business is war, and in war, if you don't replan a failing strategy, you'll die. The Falcon 030 represents a reworked strategy, and it has the potential to work.

But this appliance notion kind of makes you want to look at Atari in a different light. We've always considered Atari as the "fallen giant who can't get up," or the powerful company that's always missing its best chances for success. Atari is now such an INCREDIBLY SMALL COMPANY that we can look at them somewhat differently. And the Falcon makes that easier.

Suppose that there were a small, brand-new, California-based upstart company called Falcon Associates, and they produced a hot new multimedia computer that could display over 24 frames-per-second in true color at high resolution, could digitize and play 16-bit sound at 50KHz, and came with a built in 1.44MB floppy, a built-in hard drive, and lots of RAM. Oh, and also a 16MHz 68030, at a reasonable price. This would be truly a revolutionary machine, and there'd be no reason to doubt the zeal and vigor of its producers. They'd have no track record, and nothing but an extraordinary product to believe in. We would, in typical American fashion, give them the benefit of the doubt and wish them all the luck in the world.

Atari has made some world-class marketing blunders and they actually have some capital resources. We're letting that get in the way of seeing them fairly. We can't see that there is a terrific new product out there, only that it's Atari's new product. We're waiting for them to blow it. That's not fair.

Let's treat them with the same respect with which we'd treat Falcon Associates, and let's hope that

Atari is as successful with their truly spectacular product as Falcon Associates might be. As small as Atari has become, and as insignificant a player in the world marketplace as they have been, it makes considerable sense to treat them like a brand new company. Let's look at one thing only: the product they have to offer--the Falcon 030.

Practical Aspects

Obviously, Atari is still in the business of producing ST's. While the Mega STe has been discontinued in favor of the Falcon, the TT030 and 1040STe will continue to be produced well into the Falcon's lifetime. The STBOOK is still slated for US release, and business will continue "as usual."

So this mental-metamorphosis doesn't mean Atari has gone out of the ST business. It just means that the ST business wasn't really where it was at, and maybe the Falcon will thrust Atari closer to greatness than it has ever, ever been. And because the Falcon is a disguised ST, every ST owner could benefit greatly.

So aren't we glad it's Atari that developed the Falcon 030, and not Falcon Associates (who would have done it under a custom BIOS and used MS-DOS)? The Falcon represents a great new gamble for Atari, and it's going to be fun to watch. Only time will tell now whether the Falcon becomes the next toaster oven (Amiga pun intended).

Connecticut

I hate writing about shows, mostly because I'm always too busy to give an accurate report of what went on. But for those of you who missed the Connecticut Atarifest, it was a few hundred people at the Windsor Locks Sheraton having a good time. I wouldn't say the turnout busted the doors, but for such a young show (technically, its first year), it went well. Gribnif, CodeHead, us (Toad), and ICD were some of the big names. A lot of user-group tables crowded the

show a bit, and gave the impression that there were more developers present than there actually were, but nonetheless, it was a good show.

The day before the show there was an all-day meeting between a handful of IADA (Independent Atari Dealer Association) members and Atari. The meeting concentrated on the marketing of the Falcon as well as other practical considerations in the Atari-and-dealer relationship. That meeting went well and was a positive step towards creating a cohesive marketing strategy for Atari.

Dusseldorf

In Germany (as in all of Europe), Atari will encounter a unique market situation over the next year or so. The US dollar is at all time lows against the German mark. The reason is the low interest rates set by the Federal Reserve (about 3%) and the relatively high rates set by the German Bundesbank (about 10%).

The Bundesbank, while the analog to the Federal Reserve, is not affiliated with the German government, and as such can do what it damn well pleases (Helmut Kohl is underwhelmed with their current policy because it makes German goods less attractive on the world market). Inflation in Germany was getting out of hand as a result of trying to absorb the East German economy, and higher interest rates curb inflation by making money "cost more."

As a result of the higher interest rates, investors worldwide have lost faith in the American market (who wants to earn 3% interest?)

and have reinvested in the German market (10% is a lot more attractive), and as a result have driven up the price of the mark against the dollar. Because all of the currencies in European Community nations are tied to the German mark, they've drifted up with the mark.

To give you an idea, in the sixties, one dollar was worth 4 marks.



In the early eighties, one dollar was worth 2 marks. Now, one dollar is about 1.4 marks. Just last year one dollar was about 1.7 marks. This is bad news bears. Same thing with the French Franc. In the early eighties there were about 9 francs to the dollar. Now there are about 4.3.

The obvious answer to all this is "Gee, Dave, you sure were dumb

to go to Europe right now." And you're right. I've never eaten more cheap food in my life. A really low-quality pair of shoes will cost you \$45-\$50 in France right now. It's insane. I had a good time anyway, but did a lot more window shopping this time.

BUT, the one thing all of this has on OUR side is that Atari now gains a tremendous amount of leverage by sending the Falcon to Germany. They can either charge a lot of dollars (which would translate to a reasonable number of marks) and make a lot of money on each machine, or they could charge a fair price in dollars and sell a trillion of them in Germany because they'd be so incredibly cheap. Seriously, if they wanted to sell the machine for \$1000 US, that would only cost your average German 1400 marks right now (as opposed to 1700 one year ago, 2000 five years ago, or 4000 in 1967.) Finally, market conditions are such that American companies can actually successfully EXPORT goods to other rich nations! And Atari's actually had some luck at it even when conditions were not so favorable. There is hope.

This is an incredibly valuable opportunity for Atari and all other American companies (including my own). And between us all, maybe we can cover ten minutes worth of interest on the trade deficit!

The Dusseldorf show again shared the marquee with the Aktivleben show (active life, akin to a big German State Fair) and was a huge event. We had a booth in the

Atari US section, which was fun. The big news of the show was the Falcon intro, which involved, every hour or two, the playing of a stunning MIDI-controlled sound and light show, accompanied by a video which chronicled the Atari story, and focused on the Falcon. The guy they had doing the voice over was great. He sounded like Darth Vader. "Atari Falcon Nul-Dreissig." (Falcon zero-thirty). Over and over and over again.

There were some half-naked African dancers and flame-eaters. I don't know exactly why they were included, but it added a flavor to the show. The Falcon was rotating atop a giant glass, mirrors, and steel pyramid that was made to look as if it had just been thrust through the crust of the Earth. There was a machine continually dedicated to displaying incredibly gorgeous picture files on a large video wall (12 or 16 screens). The demo used the DSP to decompress the pictures in real-time and its most impressive special effect was

an "unrolling," where the picture would be wrapped around a cylinder and we would see it very quickly unroll. It was amazing.

Originally, there were to be Falcons for sale in Dusseldorf, but hey, sometimes it just takes too many all-nighters to make something like that happen. Apparently, Sam flew from Taiwan to Dusseldorf, carrying in his arms the first production model Falcon from the assembly line. The other thirty-or-so machines at the show were pre-production prototypes. It was an impressive display, and there were enough machines out that nearly everyone could see them first hand, and some, like I, had the opportunity to try their own programs on the machine, which was fun.

You've all read articles about the Falcon itself, so I won't bore you with its specs, but needless to say, they were talked about ad infinitum at Dusseldorf.

Other than that, Mrs. Lincoln, the play was fine. We had a good time meeting the reps for every Eu-

ropean country (Atari Italy, Atari France, Atari Spain, Atari Portugal, Atari Benelux, Atari Finland, et al.) And we look forward to a profitable relationship with Europe. We can actually offer stuff at some great prices, with the dollar as low as it is.

All for Now

Be excited about the Falcon. There's a lot of potential for that machine. Let's give Atari the benefit of the doubt and recognize that they have as much capability and ingenuity as any upstart company with a better idea. And with the right attitude, perhaps the Falcon will be the thing that no home can be without.

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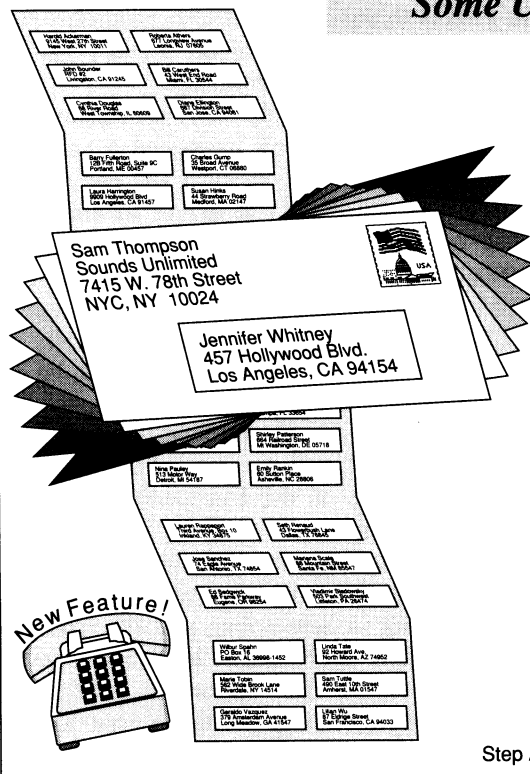
A Few Words From Our Users

Some Unsolicited Comments About Tracker/ST v3.0.

Every once in while we get a letter about Tracker/ST (our leading mailing list/mail merge program for the Atari), and we thought it would be nice to share some of the more recent comments with you, as sort of a break from our more traditional advertising.

Hmmm, let's see. Here's one: **"We love the program. Also, the duplicate name warning system is a great idea."** That one came from a minister in Evansville, Indiana. (We didn't have the time to contact each of the writers for permission to use their names, so we're leaving their names out. But these are real comments from real people.) Someone in Point Roberts, Washington wrote to say, **"Thank you for the really superb program. Keep up the good work. We need as many people as possible creating programs for the Atari ST."** When we sent out our upgrade notice for Tracker/ST v3.0, we received a wonderful letter from an antiques dealer in La Jolla, California: **"YES!!! I am very pleased with the Tracker program...[and now] you have added more indispensable features. You are way ahead of me. I had planned to write to you with additional features that I need, [but] you did them before I knew they were possible...I am very pleased with Tracker. I will eagerly await the update!"** Finally, a note on a recent registration card that came to us from Madrid, **"I will need a Spanish user manual."** Sorry, but Tracker/ST is available only in English.

So if you need a dynamite mailing list/mail merge program, check out Tracker/ST. Because, honestly, we need lots of new users to keep writing us these very nice letters.



Step Ahead Software • 496-A Hudson Street, #F39 • New York, NY 10014 • 212-627-5830

The 1992 Atari Show in
Dusseldorf, Germany

World Premiere of ATARI'S New *Falcon030*

by *Oliver Steinmeier*



Dusseldorf: Atari Extravaganza

From August 21-23, 1992 the sixth Atari show in Dusseldorf gripped the attention of the worldwide Atari community. More than 50,000 Atari fans and professional users from many different countries came to see and buy new products from 166 exhibitors. Atari itself finally presented the long-awaited Falcon030, which will be the first member of a new generation of Atari computers.

The Atari show in Dusseldorf is the world's fifth largest brand-specific computer fair. The location of Dusseldorf, close to the border to the Benelux states and to France, ensures that not only visitors from Germany but from many European countries and also from overseas have a chance to visit the "Mecca of Atariism." Unlike the huge CeBIT show in Hannover, which attracts more than half a million mostly professional computer users and developers every year, the Dusseldorf Atari show is a meeting point for all kinds of Atari users. It is a forum where developers meet colleagues and the users of their products. It is a good opportunity to purchase new software or hardware at special show prices, or to buy older (sometimes outdated) products at ridiculously low prices. Two-year old computer games for the ST, for example, were sold for 8 marks (\$5).

Software companies like DMC or 3K-Computerbild have huge booths with absolutely professional equipment and qualified personnel that are able to convince the potential power-user or business man or woman of the quality of professional Atari software. In contrast to this, Atari user groups have small booths where they try to find new members, sell their public domain disks, and provide all kinds of support that one doesn't get from commercial vendors.

Falcon Unveiling

Atari Germany boss Alwin Stumpf, Atari president Sam Tramiel, Leonard Tramiel, Richard Miller, and Bill Rehbock led off the show with a press conference. Stumpf provided the first information that anyone had seen about prices for the Falcon. The smallest version (1 meg RAM, no hard drive) is going to cost 1,398 marks, a 4 meg version with internal 65 meg hard drive will cost 2,298 marks, and the fully equipped 14 meg version, also with a 65 meg hard drive, will be available for 3,298 marks. Stumpf announced special training for dealers who want to sell the Falcon. This is to ensure that highly qualified dealers will be able to help new Falcon owners get the most out of their "personal" computers.

According to Sam Tramiel, mass production has already started. Dealers, and all interested developers, will probably get the first Falcons near the end of September, with major shipments to arrive in Germany during October. Those developers considered by Atari to be the most important for the success of the new system have had Falcon prototypes for several months already, and so the availability of software specially developed for, or adapted to, the new machine can be expected by the time the Falcon hits the stores.

Sam Tramiel called the Falcon "the first exciting machine in a long time," and announced that, because of the great importance of the European market for Atari, the new machine would first be introduced in Germany, the Benelux, France, and the United Kingdom. The US presentation will be at the Boston Computer Society Meeting in September, and the first Falcon should be available in the States in October. In his words, the Falcon is the first "personal multimedia computer." The great advantage of the Falcon030 over

other machines, according to Atari, is that it comes with everything needed for multimedia applications, whereas PCs or other computers need several expensive add-on cards to reach the power of the new Atari machine.

Stumpf also stated that there will not be any other models of the Falcon family introduced this year, thus attempting to quash rumors of a Falcon040 that had been appearing in magazines and the online services. A week after the show, however, new rumors, spread by usually well-informed sources, indicated that despite Stumpf's announcement chances are that there will be another presentation later this year. Time will tell...

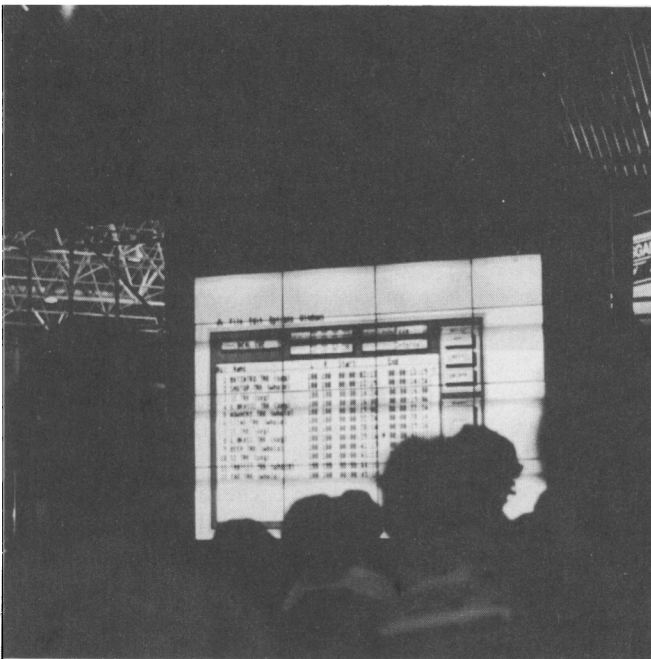
When asked about the German ZZF approval (similar to FCC approval) for the Falcon030, Mr. Stumpf refused to give any information, but he said that Atari never had any problems with the ZZF authorities.

Atari Germany reportedly has made a deal with the Karstadt department store chain (the largest in Germany), so that the Falcon can be bought at Karstadt.

Falcon: Personal Multimedia Computer

After the press conference, Atari kicked off an impressive presentation of the Falcon's sound and video features. A huge multi-screen system was used to first show a video clip that recalled the historic development of the Atari ST/TT family (see picture below). Then the focus was on the new Falcon, particularly on a machine that was placed on top of a 15-foot high pyramid in the middle of the booth, partly covered by smoke and illuminated by laser effects.

The show continued with a demonstration of the graphics features and the sound possibilities. Normen



Kowalewski from Atari Germany demonstrated with a very simple program how easily the DSP 56001 can be used to manipulate sounds. His voice, fed into the Falcon via the microphone port, was manipulated in many ways and played back via the speaker port in real time.

According to Atari, the demo program and the presentation concept were put together the night before the show opened its gates, and this probably is the reason for some technical problems (feedbacks) with the sound system during the show. Without these minor flaws, the presentation would have been even more impressive; but nevertheless, the possibilities of the Falcon itself surely were convincing.

Given all of the technical data that had appeared in online conferences and magazines, the crowds were naturally eager to see the magic Falcon "in action."

With Little Software

Atari was able to show some 30 machines at the show, and visitors got plenty of chances for some hands-on playing around. The main disappointment, however, was that the hard disks of the Falcons were basically devoid of software. The control panel, a breakout accessory, a sound program demonstrating the better-than-CD quality of the sound system, and a graphics demo were about all that could be seen. *MultiTOS*, the new multitasking TOS operating system, was not installed.

One reason for the "easy access" to the Falcons that was granted to everybody might have been that there were just a few Atari staff members at the Falcon booth. This, and also the fact that some Atari employees didn't appear to be too competent in answering questions about new products, made it difficult for the normal visitors to get Falcon information.

Demos of two video games, specially developed for the Falcon, gave everybody the chance to get an impression of a new generation of computer games that make use of the fantastic sound effects and graphics qualities. *Space Junk* from Mirage Technologies, UK, is a game commissioned by Atari that will make use of digitized video clips.

The only things that set the Falcon030 apart from a 1040 STe were the slightly darker keycaps with white letters and the colorful name tag. The machines at the AtariMesse did not have a darker case, contrary to some published reports.

The Falcons were equipped with the single-tasking TOS 4.0. The most obvious difference to TOS 2.06 is the new 3D-style GEM user interface, that also provides multi-color animated icons. It is unclear, though, if the ROMs contained the final version of the operating system: the translation of menu items and dialog texts into German was more than unsatisfactory.

Although the demo Falcons did not sport much software, most developers have announced new prod-



ducts or updates for the new machines. According to Atari Germany's Normen Kowalewski, about 40 new developers so far have expressed their interest in developing software for the Falcon. A PC emulator board is being developed by Compo, HiSoft is working on a low-cost graphics program, and Trade It has already adapted all its products to the new machine. Also, many programs that were written for the old ST line run on the Falcon without any problems, although it was surprising to many visitors that this software was not demonstrated by Atari at the show.

U.S. Marketing Strategy

I was able to talk with Sam Tramiel about Atari's strategy for the U.S. market. Atari plans to build up a new dealer network. As soon as the necessary distribution platform exists, a major advertising campaign can be expected to make the Falcon a success in the U.S. Sam Tramiel told me the prices for the U.S. market. The smallest machine will cost \$799, the 4-meg Falcon will probably cost \$1,295. According to Mr. Tramiel, the lack of memory protection is the main reason why *MultiTOS* will not be available as an upgrade for Atari computers with a 68000 CPU. Atari plans to ship *MultiTOS* with the first Falcons. It seems to be unclear, however, whether it will be in ROMs or on disk.

Despite his announcement during the Delphi Conference in August, Sam Tramiel was not willing to provide any detailed information on *ST Sutra*, a new *MS Works*-like integrated software package that is said to be coming from Atari soon. He confirmed that it was mainly developed in India, but he didn't give me any price or release date for it. The same goes for *Speedo*, the successor to the never-shipped FSM-GDOS. It wasn't shown in Dusseldorf, but reportedly

will be available for developers in September.

The *Lynx II* was shown in Dusseldorf together with a new game cartridge called "Batman Returns." Atari bought the exclusive rights for this game for the rest of this year, and they expect to come out with three new games each month until December.

The *ST Book* was not only shown, but also could be purchased for about 3,000 marks (1 meg version). At a special booth lots of Atari products were sold that had been used for demo purposes [Vorfuehrgeraete]. TT keyboards for less than 20 marks were in great demand, and other bargains on complete

Atari Mega STe systems were possible, too. As was traditional, Atari also sold umbrellas, T-shirts, jogging suits, and other products carrying the beloved Fuji symbol.

Other New Products Announced

Even though the Falcon surely was the main attraction for most visitors, nearly every software or hardware developer was able to show or even sell a new or enhanced product. It is clear that we could have easily filled this entire issue with news from the 166 companies that were at the AtariMesse, so we had to select those products that seemed to be interesting to most readers.

Papillon, a new color drawing program from Application Systems Heidelberg (ASH), comes with a complete GEM user interface and allows the use of up to 256 colors. It supports the special graphics format of *Signum!3*, the popular word processor from ASH. New versions of *Pure C* and *Pure Pascal* now run under *MultiTOS*. *Signum!3 Color* supports the printing of up to 64 colors on color printers such as the HP Deskjet 500C. The demo printouts available at the show were extremely impressive.

Atelier Digital, programmed by a company with the same name, is a new vector graphics program for the TT that allows the use of 256 out of 16.7 million colors. It costs 1,290 marks (\$900) and requires a TT with 8 meg RAM, hard disk, Matrix graphics card, and a graphics tablet.

NVDI and *XBoot* upgrades were offered by Bela, a Frankfurt-based German software distributor.

Mag!X, the MultiGEM-competitor introduced at the CeBIT show in Hannover earlier this year, now is available for the TT.

Tempus Word, the powerful word processor, has been updated by CCD. Provided that Atari's new GDOS *Speedo* will be available soon, they plan to include GDOS support. A low-cost graphics program for the new Falcon, developed by HiSoft (UK), will be distributed by CCD in Germany.

PC Emulator. Compo was not able to show the PC emulator board that Atari officially announced during the press conference. The developer Hansjoerg Sack, known from his PC- and AT-Speed boards, said that he's thinking about 80286 and 80486 emulators.

Crazy Bits, a young and innovative company from the eastern part of Germany, announced a true-color graphics program to be released in September. It supports 24-bit true color and will operate in all color resolutions (not necessarily in true color, of course) on all Atari computers.

Data Becker, Germany's leading computer book publisher, surprised most visitors with a 300-page book about the new Falcon. The book provides an overview of the history of the Atari ST/TT family, explains the concept of multitasking and MultiTOS in particular, and describes the new operating system functions of the Falcon TOS. Data Becker is not really famous for accurate information, but this book is the only source of information about the Falcon available to the public so far. Translations of Data Becker books are published in the U.S. by Abacus.

Digital Desktop, a distribution company founded earlier this year by a group of developers and dealers in order to combine their marketing resources, showed a new version of *Papyrus*, the new powerful document processing program. To catch the attention of as many visitors as possible, Digital Desktop had hired a group of (barely dressed) "Egyptian temple dancers" and a "Feuerspucker" (Is there an English word for a guy who spits burning liquids??) that kicked off an impressive show.

DMC, one of the most renowned software companies on the Atari market, introduced a new version of the DTP program *Calamus*. *Calamus S* is a smaller version of the powerful *Calamus SL*. The most important difference is a limitation of the color support. *Calamus S* costs 898 marks (\$600) and is already available, future upgrades to *Calamus SL* are possible. By the way, *Calamus* was one of the first programs to be adapted to the new Falcon.

GE-Soft planned to introduce a 50 MHz accelerator board for the TT at the Dusseldorf show, but due to some technical problems, they could only show a non-working prototype.

68040 for the ST. A Swiss developer showed a 68040 extension board that will be available for all STs and TTs in about two months. It is an external board that is supposed to be placed in a separate tower case. The speed of the prototype was very impressive; it scrolled a text in *Wordplus* faster than *Tempus* could

Atari Falcon030 Specifications

CPU: Motorola 68030 32-bit microprocessor @ 16MHz w/ 32-bit bus
FPU: Motorola 68881/68882 @ 16MHz (optional)
DSP: Motorola 56001 Digital Signal Processor running in parallel @ 32MHz w/ 32kWords (24-bit) of local zero wait state static RAM
ROM: 512kB
RAM: 1, 4 or 16 MB (14 MB usable) on daughterboard (RAM is 32-bit wide)

Expansion Bus

Internal Processor—Direct slot for 386SX emulation (third party 386SX emulator nearly completed) or other co-processors/etc.

Video

(See below for specific video modes/resolutions.)

16-bit BLITTER @ 16MHz (also handles hard drive access.)

Accepts external video sync to allow high quality genlocking.

Overlay mode for easy video titling and special effects.

Overscan support.

Hardware-assisted horizontal fine scrolling.

VIDEL (video controller) sits on 32-bit bus.

Audio

Stereo 16-bit Analog-to-Digital DMA input.

Stereo 16-bit Digital-to-Analog DMA output.

Eight 16-bit audio DMA record/playback channels.

SDMA sound/DMA co-processor.

Ports

128kB cartridge port.

2 9-pin mouse/joystick ports.

2 15-pin Ste enhanced analog/digital controller ports.

(Atari also has new analog controllers w/ a joystick, 3 fire buttons, and a 12-key keypad.)

MIDI IN, OUT/THRU.

Bi-directional parallel port.

RS232C serial port.

SCSI II w/ DMA.

Analog RGB/VGA/composite video connector.

Stereo headphone out (1/8" mini-jack).

Stereo microphone in (1/8" mini-jack).

DSP port (up to 1MHz data transfer rate).

RF modulator for TV hookup.

Localtalk compatible LAN (up to 250kbaud transfer rate).

Misc

Internal 1.44MB 3.5" HD floppy.

Internal IDE 2.5" hard drive (optional).

Pre-emptive multitasking OS (MultiTOS) w/ adaptive prioritization and inter-process communication (also 68040 compatible).

Realtime clock and battery backed up RAM.

1040ST-style case w/ internal fan.

North American availability in mid-October.

Price

1MB/no HD — \$799 list

4MB/65MB — \$1399 list

do it on a regular ST. The price will be about 3,000 marks (\$2,200). A German Atari magazine plans to print a series of articles explaining how to build this board "at home."

The Link. Most visitors were surprised to see how small a host adaptor can be when they saw ICD's new "The Link" adaptor. The entire board is placed in a SCSI plug for the DMA port. No external power supply is needed. By using The Link, Atari owners can now use any kind of SCSI device with the Atari without having to buy a special hard disk kit.

EasyBase. Omikron Software for the first time showed new versions of their *EasyBase* data base management system. The new *EasyBase Light* will be available for only 99 marks (\$60) and is supposed to be the cheapest data base for the ST/TT. *EasyBase 2* will be a much more powerful program that is based on SQL and the client-server model. Omikron plans versions for other platforms (DOS, UNIX) as well.

Mortimer DeLuxe is a new and more powerful version of the famous utility program, *Mortimer*. Carsten Kraus, president of Omikron Software, told me that they are still looking for a distributor in the USA. English versions of most programs and even translations of the manuals exist because of the availability of the products on the British market.

GFA-BASIC is the favorite programming language of many Atari ST and TT owners. Since GFA headquarters in Dusseldorf was closed down at the end of 1991, there hasn't been any support for the popular development platform in Germany. The software distributor Richter has now made a deal with GFA in order to revive GFA-BASIC. Four programmers at Richter are currently trying to figure out if it is possible to use the completely unstructured and undocumented source code of GFA-BASIC as a basis for fu-

ture versions. By mid October a decision should have been made whether there will be a future for GFA-BASIC. It is then planned to come out with new versions supporting both the Falcon and MultiTOS. Richter said that new versions would be available worldwide.

CyPress. The German software house Shift presented a new version of the comfortable and powerful word processor *CyPress*. Also an upgrade of *Interface*, considered to be the best resource construction set for the Atari, could be purchased.

Calligrapher. Working Title is the German distributor of the Calligrapher. A new version 3 now supports NVDI and MultiGEM; GDOS is not necessarily needed to use the program.

Portfolio. Owners of the Portfolio now can equip their palmtop computer with a MIDI interface. The Czechoslovakian company ABAK presented an interface to hook up a tape recorder to the Portfolio. Programs and data can be saved on standard audio tapes. The transmission rate of up to 2,400 Baud is acceptable, because the system provides a much cheaper mass storage than RAM cards.

U.S. Developers at Meese

The U.S. market was represented by a group of developers and distributors, among them Toad Computer, ICD, Maxwell C.P.U., and Best Electronics. Toad showed the *STraight Fax* program that is not yet available in Germany. Also new to the German market is Toad's *Stealth* hard disk kit that caught the attention of many visitors because of its professional and attractive design. Quite surprising, and also disappointing, was that the booth of Double Click Software remained empty during the entire show. The German version of *DataDiet* was sold at the Artifex booth, and users are now waiting for an update that supports MultiTOS.

MakroCDE is the German distributor of such nice U.S. products as Jim Allen's Turbo accelerator boards and Norm Weinress' DEKA keyboard adaptor that might come in handy for many future Falcon owners who don't enjoy the 1040STe keyboard.

Other Booths. About half a dozen Atari user groups had their own booths at the show, many of them still support the old 8-biters that otherwise do not get any attention in Germany anymore. Atari itself provided lots of Lynx II handheld games, 800XL computers, and 7800 systems for an "entertainment center" where people could enjoy lots of different video games when they became tired from being pushed through the halls by the masses.

A Successful Show?

Was the 1992 Atari Show the success Atari needs so badly? It's hard to tell at this time;



most of the visitors seemed to be very satisfied with the show, and particularly with the Falcon. The exhibitors sold a lot of products, and therefore were satisfied with the show itself. The developers and dealers, however, are still skeptical about the Falcon's ability to bring them (and Atari) the success they need to survive. The technical "wizards" have done their job, it's now up to the marketing guys to make the Falcon the dream machine of a new generation of computer owners, to make it the "multimedia computer" and workstation for everybody's home. A first step on this way might be Atari's participation at Germany's largest consumer computer show in Cologne, Germany, in early October. The Computer Shopper Show (CSS) is the successor of the traditional Amiga show and is now open to all other systems as well. Its main focus is on home applications and personal use of computers, and the multimedia machine Falcon 030 definitely could prove to be the "Amiga Killer," provided that Atari manages to have some neat video games and other software available for the show to convince Amiga and PC users of the superior features of the new machine.

The Falcon030 is the first step on the way to a new Atari era. But it is no secret that power-users will definitely need a more powerful and more extendable version with better graphics resolution. It is very important that the so-called "Falcon040" is introduced soon to complete the Falcon family. The Falcon030, however, has the potential to win the mass market. Let's hope its manufacturer has this potential as well...

Oliver Steinmeier is a 25-year-old Computer Science graduate student at Karlsruhe University majoring in computer networking, operating systems, and database systems. A frequent contributor to various German computer magazines since 1984, Oliver is the co-author of several computer books, mainly for the Atari ST, but also for Amiga and DOS computers. He is a co-developer of the KBS operating system, a highly flexible and modular multitasking operating system for personal computers and workstations (first implementation on Atari ST.)

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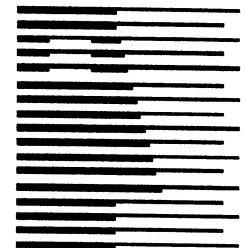
Atari SLM 605 Drum	\$ 129
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EditTrack Gold	\$ 79	StereoMaster Sampling (STE)	\$ 64
SMPTETrack Gld. w/SMPTE	\$ 349	Roland Gear 10% overcost	\$ WoW

"Look! New Lower Prices"

Some (Mostly) Recent Downloads



A Funny Thing Happened

This summer, *Publisher ST* suddenly stopped working on my system. I have no idea why, but it now wants to print nothing at all, or sometimes just about 1/3 of a page. Everything else about my system works just fine, and *Ultrascript* still is quite happy about printing Publisher-generated Postscript files.

Multiple re-installs from the original disks failed to solve the problem, as did stripping out all accessories and AUTO programs. A different version of *GDOS* failed, and even *G+Plus* from the Codeheads failed to eliminate the problem. The folks on CompuServe's Atari forums were unable to help, nor were the representatives from GST Holding (the developers). Most inexplicable. Anyone out there have an idea? This condition is still unfixed, and I don't have a clue.

Memory Tester

Anyway, as I got more desperate and frustrated with the *Publisher* problem, one possibility I considered was a memory failure. I found a memory test program in the CIS download libraries: *MEMTEST.PRG* by Willie Brown of Supra Corp. No documentation came with the program, whose file description indicated that it tests all memory above the program's load address. It cycles until stopped, with the display changing as it writes over screen memory. Dunno what its output looks like if it finds an error, since there seems to be no problem with my RAM.

Really Erasing a File

Recently, a local Atarian found himself eagerly searching for a utility program that would recover an accidentally deleted file from one of his disks. (Last I heard, he'd been directed to *Tiny Tools* and probably a few others). Turns out there are programs like this, and they work because ...

A Deleted File. Isn't. Exactly. Deleted.

In fact, the directory entry is clobbered, and the FAT (File Allocation Table) is revised to mark the sectors the file occupied as available. If you haven't attempted to save anything to the disk, and if you're a little lucky and a lot careful, and have an "undelete"

utility at your disposal, the file can often be recovered.

Naturally, *yr hmble srvnt* has never had need of such a utility ...

More to the point, I try to have a backup of everything important, so if I accidentally clobber something, I can usually recover it from a backup. If not, it probably wasn't all that important anyway.

Now consider the flip side of that problem: have you ever wanted to erase a file so thoroughly that it can't be recovered?

Whatever for? Well, as a matter of fact, there are occasions when one needs to do exactly that. I recently had such an experience. My hard drive was in the process of dying, and I had a number of files on it that pertained to my company's business, as well as a number of personal files, like personal finance information.

Nothing really sensitive, you understand, but things I wouldn't want to fall into anyone else's hands.

Knowing that I was about to take the hard drive to the body shop, I went looking for a "security erase" utility. The one I wound up using was *Shredder Plus*, from Do Not Stamp Software (shareware). This kind

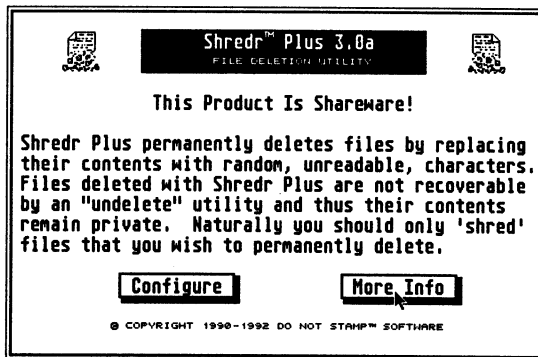
of program basically locates the sectors allocated to the file you wish to "shred," and overwrites each with garbage.

This program has some nice features, including wildcard capability. It selects a random pattern to use in the overwrite operation, and is capable of repeating the overwrite pass multiple times.

Shredder Plus seems to work well and smoothly; although I haven't tried to recover a file thus trashed, a quick scan of a floppy disk on which I'd used it showed nothing but garbage—what I was hoping for. Naturally, this type of erase does take a little time, and isn't the sort of thing I usually do, but it's got a place in my library. Guess it's time to dust off the check-book.

Finding a File

As one stuffs more and more, er, stuff on one's hard drive, it seems to get more and more difficult to find things—even if the HD is reasonably well orga-



nized. I used to use *Quickfind 1.5* by Darek Mihocka and Ignac Kolenko, but it started blowing up on my new enlarged partitions; so off to the download libraries.

I came up with *HeidiSeek* by Carl Hafner ("Uncle Carl") (shareware). Once again dusting off the checkbook seems appropriate. *HeidiSeek* is a simpler program than *QuickFind*, able to search only one partition at a time. However, it has the considerable advantage of working properly with my new hard drive and TOS 1.4.

HeidiSeek does have one feature I'd rather "Uncle Carl" had left out: there's a sound effect on each file find (harmless), and a sort of muffled explosive sound on exit (no harm done). Unfortunately, the program leaves the sound chip active, which distorts the key click sound (this I don't like). Moreover, SOUND ON is the default option, and there doesn't seem to be a way to save an altered configuration. It's a mild nuisance to remember to turn off the sound each time I run the program.

Faint Praise?

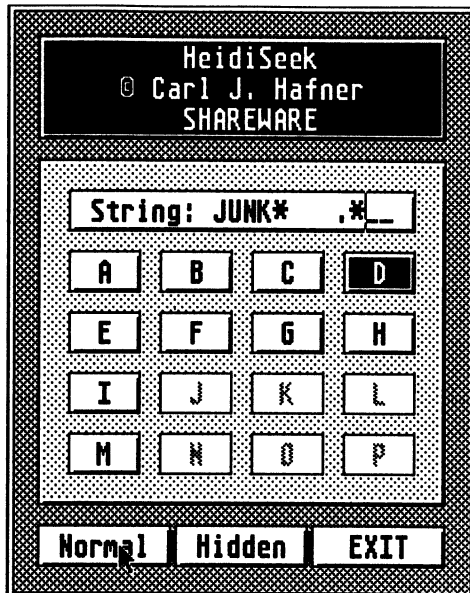
Reading back over the previous paragraphs, I perceived a certain lack of enthusiasm in my comments on the preceding utilities. At first, I thought that might be a little unfair; then I realized this attitude can be taken as high praise. All three programs do their comparatively simple tasks smoothly and well. They don't require the user to be a rocket scientist, and there's little real glamour to either the functions performed or the programs.

What of It?

A utility function is something you either need or you don't; if you do need it, you want a program that will get the task done with little muss or fuss so you can go on about your business. *MEMTEST*, *Shredder Plus* and *HeidiSeek* do that (except for that silly sound effect option), and that's exactly what I was looking for in the first place. All are recommended.

CompuServe Message Reader

Paul Gee (Hirsute Technology) is an Atarian who lives in the UK. He has written a message handler designed for use with Jim Ness' popular CompuServe navigator *QuickCIS*. The program is free-ware (or at least the version I have is), and it's a good companion piece for *QuickCIS*. *QCMSG* can be run from within *QuickCIS*, or externally, and has a nicer



presentation than *QuickCIS* itself. The one feature *QCMSG* lacks that I'd like to see added is a string search; *QuickCIS* has one for searching libraries of previously saved messages. I'd like to be able to search the current set of messages as well, though.

For those of you who are CompuServe users, *QuickCIS*, *QCMSG*, and *EdHak* are an excellent combination. The cooperation that Jim Ness, Paul Gee, and Craig Harvey have demonstrated at long distance (only a few thousand miles!) is impressive; it's one of the things that still make the world of Atari users a fun place to be.

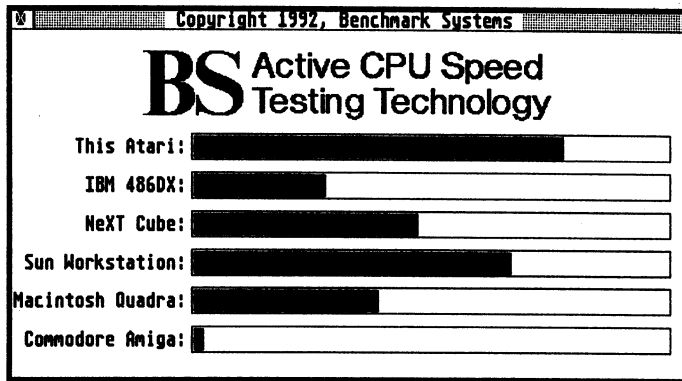
Astronomical Data

This next item isn't a program; rather *CALASTRO.DAT* is the result of Judy Golick (Montreal) working with some astronomical tools to produce a calendar data file for use with Bill Aycock's *CAL* accessory. It contains dates for lunar phases, equinoxes/solstices, and major meteor showers from June, 1992 through December, 1995. Simply load or merge the data file into *CAL*. Naturally, you'll need a copy of *CAL* (shareware) to use it.

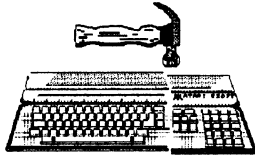
Another Joke (Isn't it?)

You've gotta figure there will be something strange about a program called *BS.PRG* from Benchmark Systems (?ware). There is. The program runs in monochrome only, and its output speaks for itself (see illustration). The accompanying text file mentions a shareware donation for which the respondent will receive a copy of "ACTIVE CPU SPEED TECHNOLOGY ELITE." That's why I called it "?ware"; I'm not curious (yellow)—well, at least not \$20 worth.

If a reader happens to send the fee, I'd like to hear what "ACSTE" really is. Let me know.



ST TOOLBOX



by J. Andrzej Wrotniak

Nothing About Falcon Here

Our esteemed Publisher was quite happy when I told him what this column is going to be about. "At least one piece without Falcon," he said. Well, not quite. Here it goes.

Back in 1985 Atari introduced a computer much better and user-friendly than the then-standard PC-XT. In the following seven years the clones made lots of progress, at least in terms of brute CPU power, if not the architecture, user-friendliness and look-and-feel: *Windows 3.1* looks good but feels terrible. In the meantime, the ST line virtually stood in place with a shrinking (as if that were possible!) share of the market.

Now we greet *Falcon*, a very exciting machine. While it does not beat the 486 in the naked processor performance, in most aspects its architecture and capabilities seem to be superior. If, however, an extrapolation of the previous marketing success can be of any use in predicting how the *Falcon* will do, the future looks rather bleak. History may repeat itself, but I would be very happy to be wrong here. As for now, I am going to buy a *Falcon* or two while they last (assuming they show up on this market at all) and dig in. Sad.

Now, Joe: *nothing about Falcon below this line.*

***Idealist*: A Handy, Dandy Printout Utility**

Contrary to some earlier predictions, storing information on magnetic media has not resulted in a decline in the amount of information printed on paper. Many people still prefer to read the information from a hard copy, not from a computer display. What's more, computers with their attached printers have proved to be handy tools in generating printouts, needed or not, and now we may be using even more paper than ten years ago.

Many kinds of disk files sooner or later end up in print: program documentation, on-line newsletters, program code and more. Quite often we do it just to read the paper-based text at our leisure, away from the computer terminal. The printing can be done from a word processor or, if the file is just plain ASCII text, directly from the desktop.

The first way is somewhat of a hassle, as we do not want to change the text, just to print it out; the sec-

Idealist:

An Excellent File Printer from Germany

and a Link to the Outer World:

Publisher II on the PC

ond is quite limited, giving us no control over *how* the text will be printed.

Some freeware and commercially distributed utilities allow us to set the printer attributes before a file is printed, some will also do the printing (queuing the files, adding page headers etc.). There are also more advanced file printout programs setting the printer attributes and providing some elementary formatting capabilities (like arranging the text in multiple columns to save space).

My previous encounters with these programs used to be quite disappointing—until recently, when I came across a very handy Public Domain program called *Idealist* (CN #718D) and written by Mr. Christoph Bartholme from Karlsruhe in Germany. Very soon, it became my favorite utility of its kind, and, indeed, my life would be much more miserable without it.

Idealist prints out plain ASCII files and files in the *First Word/Word Writer* format. It will work with any printer, as the printer commands (and some of the presets and user preferences) are defined in an adaptation (setup) file. The program comes with setup files for most of the nine- and 24-pin dot matrix printers as well as for the HP Laser family. One of the setup files is extensively commented in English and you should be able to customize *Idealist* for your oddball printer fairly easily (provided you have the printer manual listing all the necessary control codes).

One setup file defines four various print styles, which may differ in font used and in pitch (horizontal and/or vertical). The text can be formatted into one or more (up to nine!) columns, with line wrap (if necessary) and optional page headers. Of course, you can preview page layouts before printing them.

The multi-column printout alone can save lots of paper (and I find the 20 cpi font very readable on my Panasonic KX-P1124), but, when printing larger files, you may also set *Idealist* to print just the odd- or even-numbered pages in order to use both sides of the paper. You can also work in a "chain" mode, without page breaks between files (but with clear spacing between files).

Highly Recommended

The user interface is good-looking and simple to use. Almost every function can be accessed from the menu or via buttons placed on the desktop. *Idealist* can

(F1..F4)

ELITE 12

MICRON 15

ENG 17

TINY 20

COL-UMNS:

Chain

1 3 5

2 4 6

Normal

g with slash

Numbers Z

Headline

High Qual

Sans Seri

SKIP PAGES

MARGIN:

ing

Contin

STARBASE.PAS

- TOTAL -

88051 Bytes

16 Page(s)

Longest Line: 94 Chars

Cut

Lines: 4

Original

Lines: 3165

Printer

Lines: 1585

Statistics

Page 2

Original Lines: 211.419

Longest Line: 78 Chars

Cut Lines: 1

SHIF

Exit

call your favorite text editor from where the text can be modified if necessary. The program user has a lot of flexibility in adjusting *Idealist* to his/her needs and preferences, and the time spent on this task will be well rewarded.

I have used *Idealist* a lot in the last month, mostly to print out program code and documentation. It is a well-designed, well-behaved, good-looking and truly useful program with quite a high degree of customization possible. And yes, it comes with a comprehensive manual in English. In a short time, *Idealist* became one of my favorite and most used utilities for the ST. If you print out lots of text, you definitely need this program. Enough said.

Publisher II ST vs. Publish It!

During my last trip to my favorite Atari dealer, I picked up a piece of PC-DOS software: *Publish It!* for DOS at a discounted price of \$80. If I have to live with a PC clone at work, let me at least enjoy one familiar piece of software with the Atari ST look and feel!

Familiar is, indeed, the word. Twelve (measured!) minutes from opening the package, I had the first printout in my hands, and nobody could tell it was not from my ST. If not for the VGA screen and the (renamed) Desk menu at the far right (not left) it would be almost impossible to see any difference between *Publish It!* and its ST equivalent, *Pub*

lisher II (see my review of the latter in the April '92 issue of *Current Notes*).

More importantly, the claims of file compatibility between both programs turned out to be true. I have had no problems moving my .DTP files between the ST and the PC. Of course, the floppy on which I carried it between both installations had to be formatted in a PC-compatible fashion (*NeoDesk* will do it just right if set to 9 sectors and 80 tracks; the freeware *DC Formatter* is OK too; use the "MS-DOS Boot" option).

Now, my office machine is a 50 MHz, 486-based clone. *Publish It!* really screams on it, as compared to the *Publisher II* on my humble 8 MHz ST. In spite of all DOS-imposed memory limitations and lots of disk swapping, it really screams. And, besides, my home

IDEALIST File Options Extras

2:09:53 pm

TEXT: STARBASE.PAS ADAPTION: KX-P 1123 (JAN/1)

Headline

LEFT: #N of #D #Z

MIDDLE:

RIGHT: Page #S

NUMBER OFFSET: 0

BLANK LINES: 0 1 2

WHEN ON BOTH SIDES! BACK PAGES MIRRORRED

Cancel Ok

alist

KEYTES FREE

IDEALIST File Options Extras

(F1..F4)

ELITE 12/7

MICRON 15/8

ENG 17/9

TINY 20/10

COL-UMNS:

Chain K

1 3 5..

2 4 6..

Normal

g with slash

Numbers Z

Headline 0

High Quality

Sans Serif

SKIP PAGES

MARGIN:

ingle

Contin

Page Lay

2 * 75

printer is a Panasonic KX-P1124, a respectable 24-pin device, while I've got an HP LaserJet II at work!

The PC-DOS version of the package is not only half the price of *Publisher II ST*, but it also has some extra goodies thrown in. One is a package of page designs, borders and assorted trinkets (available separately on the Atari market). The second one, much more significant, is a (somewhat downscaled) *Typografica*, a pixel-mapped font generator. You just specify the font face (out of the six or seven available), devices (screen and printer type) and point sizes (anywhere between 6 and 96), and the program generates the proper font files. This is quite a generously assembled package for this price—here we in the ST world are paying for the small size of our market.

Fonts from the PC: Good News and Bad News

Wait a minute? A font generator? Does this mean I can make fonts to use with the Atari GDOS on the ST? Well, the answer is both yes and no, or just yes, sort of.

Unfortunately for us, the *Publish It!* font files are completely incompatible with the GDOS standard used by *Publisher II* on the ST. On the other hand, *Typografica* can generate fonts for various PC-DOS applications. Of these, the *Ventura Publisher* standard turned out to be compatible with GDOS, with some limitations.

Ventura fonts up to 14 points in size are OK with the *Publisher II ST*. I was able to install the Symbols typeface on my Atari ST, and now I'm happy as a skunk-eating cabbage (any Kentuckians out there?) using all the math symbols, including the whole Greek alphabet, on my home machine. This is the good news.

The bad news is that, at the larger sizes, the *Ventura* font files seem to be divided into 32k segments (accessible by the brain-damaged PC-DOS 16-bit address mode), while GDOS, without having to worry about memory segmentation, uses just one big file for the whole font. The old *Fontz!* program can read just the first segment of a *Ventura* font and write it back to disk as a kosher GDOS font file. Up to 20 point size or so you can live with it: it makes sense to cut fonts at ASCII 126, unless you want to access all those funny exotic characters; above 20 points we end up with incomplete fonts.

Don't ask me how I know: all it takes is Dan Wilga's *MemFile* sector editor (free!) and nothing better to do on a weekend night. (I will still try to rip the proper fragments off the large *Ventura* fonts and make them work with the ST, just give me some time: if you know what the problem is, you can fix it!)

Anyway, for just \$80 I ended up with quite a lot:

- * A perfect DOS-world clone of a popular and easy to use desktop publishing program from the ST environment, to use on the superfast idiot in my office,

- * Full DTP file compatibility (in both directions) between my PC clone and the ST,
- * An access to an HP Laser printer,
- * A truckload of extra GDOS fonts for the ST, in the (most used) in-between sizes like 9 or 11 points, plus the full math symbol font.

Not a bad deal, and many of our readers who use an ST at home and a PC-DOS machine at work may find *Publish It!* of interest, too.

The Joys of Desktop Publishing

The company I work for sells and supports, among others, C++ libraries for use in civil aviation applications (keeping track of various airplanes in the air, making sure they won't crash or get lost and similar stuff). We are a bunch of good people, and our president wants us to become even better through suffering. Not only are we underfed, underdressed and underpaid, but we are free to do all our documentation and other desktop publishing work on any DTP package as long as it is *Word Perfect 5.1* printing in 12-point Swiss.

My colleague, friend and Unix guru, Richard, recently got an assignment to prepare a user update newsletter (the boss wouldn't let me do any publishing work after he found a *Life Is Hell* comic strip bound into a Very Important and Professional Document).

After a 15-minute training session, it took my friend an hour or so to import his *Word Perfect* text into *Publish It!*, format it into nice frames and three columns with a title in Brushwood 48, spice up with some clip art and take the proof copy to the Big Guy. "What did you do this thing on?", the boss asked. "*Word Perfect 5.1*," lied I through my teeth, and my friend confirmed trying, without much success, to look as innocent as he ever could. "You guys are really good with *Word Perfect*," said the boss, not quite convinced, "Andrzej, you haven't brought your Atari to work again?"

Well, Richard has never used the *Publisher* before. All he knew was *WordPerfect*, the industry leader. He may still use it for typing, but not, he said, for any page formatting beyond a simple "Dear Sir" letter.

In the meantime, my Gemulator package just arrived, so that I can show some of my Atari stuff on a machine without an Atari logo on it (it ain't funny!). Installing the Gemulator board takes five minutes or so and my 50 MHz, 486 PC-DOS machine in the office now pretends to be an Atari ST running at about 10 MHz (i.e. about 20% faster than a "normal" ST), albeit with somewhat slower and jerky screen redraws. There has been a Gemulator review in the last issue, and in a couple of months I may have also some remarks to share.

See you at the Reston AtariFest. If you have any complaints about this column, drop by to see me in the Debonair Software booth. Until then.

Gemulator, gives you freedom to use ST software on DOS computers!

Freedom

Now ST users can buy freedom in a box! *Gemulator* runs Atari ST software on any 386/486 DOS compatible computer with VGA monitor and PC mouse. Don't throw away your ST software, keep it; you don't need to spend 100's of dollars buying duplicate DOS versions. In fact, when you buy *Gemulator* and a DOS compatible computer you can use specialized DOS software and keep buying new low-priced ST software. Tell your friends how great ST software is and tell them to buy *Gemulator*. That'll keep ST developers in business and give you the power to make a difference in the Atari ST community (rather than watch and debate as it dwindles).

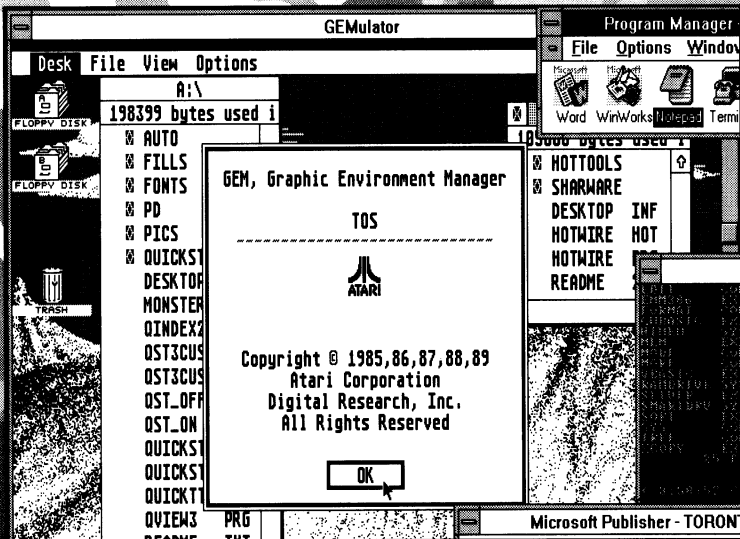
WHAT can you DO with *Gemulator*?

- Run Calamus, PageStream, WordPerfect and all other major ST software
- Use all 3 ST screen resolutions! no need to buy an extra monitor
- Up to 4 versions of TOS (1.0 to 2.06) at once great for developers testing software compatibility
- DOS & ST Hard Drive access share PC's disk drives, hard drives and printers
- Print from any ST application even graphics programs like Calamus, PageStream!
- STE's 16.6 color palette
- Reads all ST disks including twisted & TOS 1.0 disks share any data between ST and PC software

Easy to install
no screwdriver's needed, that's all!

Windows compatible
runs from DOS or Windows!

Portable ST
run ST software on DOS laptop!



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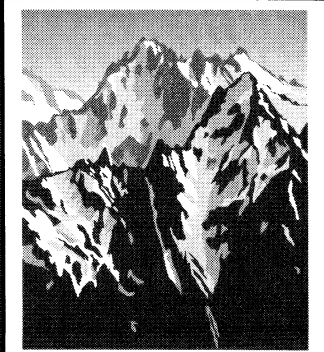
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Convector Professional

Review by David Barkin

...does everything it's supposed to do and more.

Here at one of the busy downtown offices of the vast Current Notes Publishing empire, boredom and counting money are our main occupations. Thus it was with a certain amount of reluctance that I opened up the package containing *Convector Professional* by *Gribnif Software*. The auto-tracing, bit-map to vector convertor. Uh oh, work!

When It's Flawless!

Now, one month later and the meticulous testing and whacking of the product in the CN lab for flaws, discrepancies and weaknesses are over and done with. Now the real problems begin—How to fill up enough text space to satisfy the cruel and meticulous editors at *Current Notes*. I say this because this program is flawless. This program does everything it's supposed to do and more. This program is one of those rare events where you can do things you would have liked to do, but were too dumb to think of wishing for before you had the program. That's just the beginning of my problems. This is because I am anxious to establish a reputation as *NEVER* completely approving of *ANY PROGRAM!* And let's face it, how much nit-picking can I do and both fill up a lot of text and still sound decadent and dissatisfied?

To begin, I suppose a brief explanation of what an auto-tracing program is, is in order. A bit-map image consists of individual dots. This collection of individual dots form an image. When this image is printed out, one dot from my printer will correspond to one dot of the original image. This raises some interesting questions. If my printer is rated at 300 DPI (dots per inch) and the image was drawn, scanned or put into the computer by voodoo at 150 dpi, it will print out at one half size if my software is capable of optimizing it. If I tried to print it out at the actual size of the image (the actual size independent of dpi), the dreaded jaggies appear. This is because the software will attempt to create one large dot instead of a large number of dots to simulate the dots in the image. The same factors hold true if I attempt to shrink or distort my image. The image is composed of dots and by changing its size or relationship the image will lose its integrity. In other words, it won't look as good as it could.

A vector image, on the other hand, is an image that consists of mathemati-

cal points and mathematical relationships within these points. A straight line in a bit image consists of a certain number of individual dots. In a vector image, a straight line is a mathematical relationship between point A and point B. Thus a vector drawing can be resized or distorted without losing its clean look since it doesn't consist of dots. Only when the image is printed does the software assign printer dots to the actual vector image.

Bit to Vector

Furthermore, the quality of a bit image is dependant on its original composition. A 300 dpi image will, for all practical purposes, print out the same on a 300 dpi laser printer or a 2400 dpi linotype. A vector image, on the other hand, will print out better according to the device being used to print it since it doesn't consist of dots but rather mathematical relationships. Think about it. All this being said, an auto tracing program is a program that traces bit images and converts them into vector format.

Up until about six months ago there were no such programs at all available for the ST, and then the deluge; there are now at least five such programs or modules and more on the way. This is the story of one of these programs.

Convector comes packaged in one of those loose-leaf, slide in box combinations. The program is on a double-sided, non copy-protected disk. Well, actually the copy protection consists of the fact that before you run the program for the first time, an installation pro-

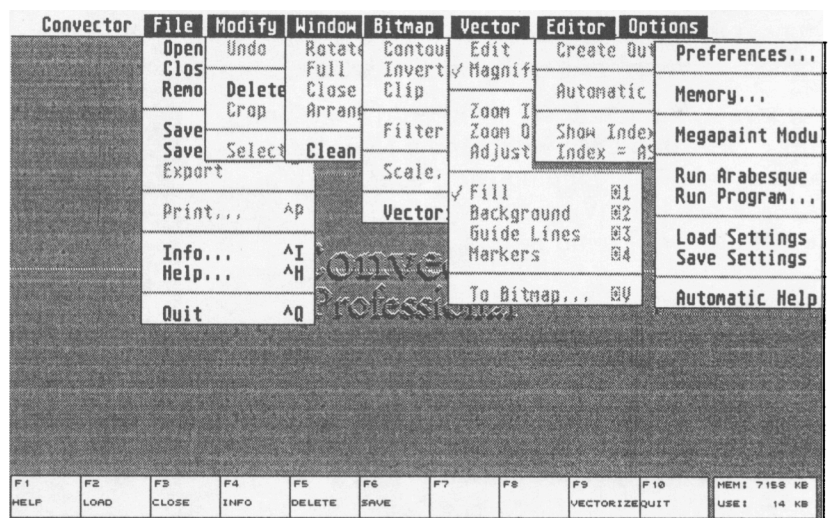


Figure 1. The main screen of Convector. Despite a plethora of options the actual use of the program is quite simple, but the options are there. Note that just about every command has a keyboard equivalent.

gram must be used that registers your name and address into the program. The quality of this package shows right from the very beginning. As a little aside, I might note that I am not a member of the “if I need the manual, the program stinks school of reviewing.” On the contrary, I always hope that the manual is written for complete morons. This is based on two theories.

1. You can always skip parts you understand, but you can't read what's not there, and
2. “Know thyself.

Well brace yourself, here comes my one criticism of this program. The manual, while seemingly overkill, actually leaves a lot of definitions and explanations out. Here we have a high quality document of over 60 pages (and that doesn't count the index) and many explanations of terms and details are missing. Basically, this doesn't matter. After all, how much does one need to know in order to run an auto-tracing program; and besides that, the important parts of the program are carefully explained. Still, it strikes me as odd that a manual that is twice as long as necessary leaves so much out. OK, that's it, that's all the criticism you're going to get about this program and I got it out of the way early.

Two Versions

On the disk, aside from various images that are used as part of the tutorial and the installation program, there are two versions of the actual *Convector* program. One for the ST/STe and one tailored for the TT. The TT version of the program takes full advantage of the built-in math co-processor and it shows. While *Convector* runs reasonably fast on the ST, on the TT it flies.

Convector has some incredible options besides your basic auto-tracing. These are of the “why didn't I think of that” options, but before we get into them, let me describe the basic program. After running the program, you find yourself on the “Desktop.” That's right *Convector* uses a desktop as its operational motif. This includes icons for a trash can, printer, and clipboard, and each bit image and vector image has its own distinctive type of icon. This way you can load a great number of images to start your work session before systematically working on them. You can also store a great number of vectorized images before saving them. The number of images you can load is limited by memory only. More on this later.

It's important to note that just about any bit image format you can think of, from any platform, can be

loaded. I won't even go through the semi-mandatory requirement of naming them. Fourteen different formats, not only from the ST world but IBM, Mac and who knows what else are included. While *Convector* does not support color or grayscale images directly, you can load them and then convert them into monochrome for tracing.

The program allows you to set a number of preferences. Do you want the loaded image to appear in an open window? Do you want to use a default format for loading or, for that matter, do you want a selection option at all? How about an undo buffer? For each image or just for one? What is your preferred Vector format to save your auto-traced files in? In fact, just about any preference that would make life

easier is available for setting including some that I really didn't even know what to make of. Let me stop describing preferences and describe an actual vectorization. (Is this a real word? If not, it should be.)

Playing with Images

First, hitting the “open” under the file drop down menu, I select .IMG from the file selection menu and load my image. In this case, I select the mandatory butterfly. Yes, it seems that all tracing programs like to include a butterfly. This butterfly is all spiffy clean, which is to say, unlike the real world where bit images are full of little extraneous pixels (dirt) that clutter up the image and who wants them to be a part of the vector image?

Making believe that this is a dirty image, I go over to the bit map pull down menu. Here we have the bit map editing functions, which are used to prepare an image for vectorizing. We can invert the image, contour it, and or filter it. We can do this to the entire image or a selected clip or block. Filtering is an important option.

OK, ok, this image is as clean as a whistle, but the filtering selection gives certain additional options to specify the filtering parameters. Selecting “noise” simply eliminates individual loose pixels. At the same time, you can smooth the outlines of the image, making it easier to vectorize. You can specify all or none of these options. You can scale the image and you can even save the image in either .IMG or *Megapaint* .BLD formats. After using or not using filtering or other possibilities, you move on to Vectorize, the heart of the program.

Once again, you can simply press the vectorize command or exercise your rights as an American Citizen to further stipulate just how you want this process done. Do you want the image to be vectorized with bezier curves or are you satisfied with straight lines? Bezier curves are curved lines with embedded control

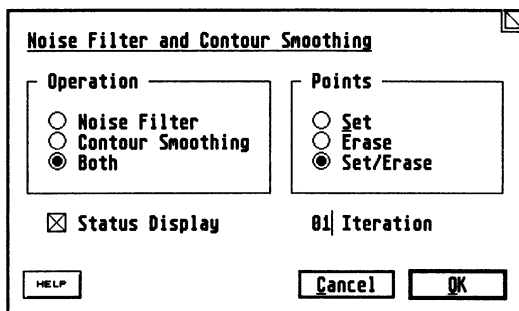


Figure 2. The filter dialogue box in Convector.

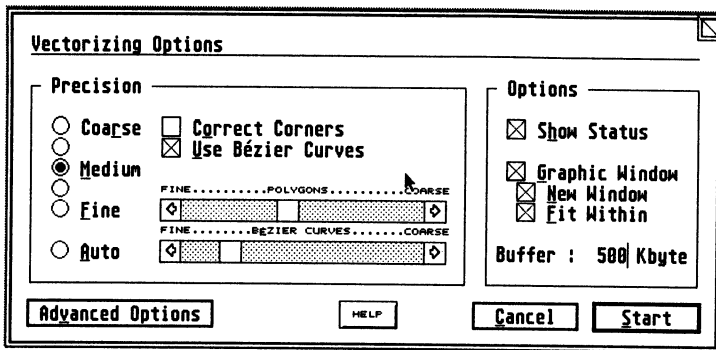


Figure 3. The first Vectorization dialogue box.

points so that a vector drawing program can later modify the degree of curve. The straight line option means just that, the object is vectorized in straight lines. These lines are drawn very close together to simulate curves and vectorize much faster than the bezier line selection.

Whichever choice you make, you have further options of how finely these curves or straight lines should follow the image. You have a sliding bar as well as fixed degrees of fineness to choose from. You would think that there is a straight tradeoff here of speed vs quality. Which is to say, if you want a really

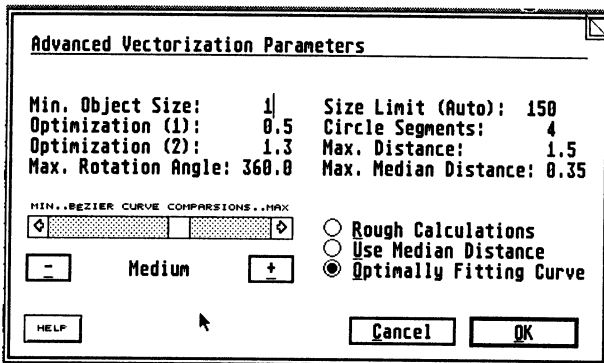


Figure 4. Not satisfied? Here are some of the advanced options.

good vectorized image, you would choose a very "fine" option. Such is not the case. If your image itself has "jaggies" as part of the image, if you choose very fine as your option, you will vectorize them into your drawing. You should actually choose a "coarse" or "medium" option. But these choices will vary as you gain experience with the program. Of course, you could simply just use the "auto" option and let the program make these painful decisions. "Auto" seems to work very nicely and, for those people who can't face dilemmas, seems a viable alternative.

A New Can of...

Finally, the last selection in this dialogue is the "advanced options," which, in turn, opens up an entirely new can of worms. Within this dialogue you can stipulate user definable parameters (hey, this last expression defines my advance into techy jargon) for excluding, by size, parts of the image from the vectorization process. You can define how far your bezier

curves can deviate from the actual image and a host of other advanced settings. The really nice part of this dialogue is that you don't have to use it at all. It's nice to know it's there, but most jobs really don't need it. It includes default settings that successfully cover the territory.

What about saving Vector formats? Which ones? Here again there is a choice of nine formats including GEM, CVG, VEK (*Megapaint*), Encapsulated Postscript and many more. *Convector*, while not a vector editing program, does have some editing features. Unfortunately, while you

have a wide choice of formats to save in, *Convector* will only load in its own specialized format, CVR. This is the second time that I've mentioned that *Convector* has some editing features - It must be time to move on to...

Incredibly Delicious Extras!

Here are the "I wish I thought of that" options. *Convector* can be run as a desk accessory. (Hey, why not vectorize that screen image from within another program?) This accessory works directly with Gribnif's own Vector/Raster drawing program, *Arabesque Professional*, but it can be used from within any program that allows desk accessories. Not to be parochial and restrictive, Gribnif thoughtfully gives you the option of using *Convector* directly as a *Megapaint Professional* module.

Another really cute option is the ability to scale your vector image and then convert it into a bit image. This comes in handy on two levels. First, sometimes you want to use a bit image, but need one of the correct size; and second, once a bit image is expanded, you can then re-vectorize it sometimes with better results than the original vector image.

Another juicy tidbit is that every command has a keyboard equivalent, a feature that comes in especially handy when *Convector* is being used as an accessory. You can create a block from within your bit image and only vectorize the selected block. For that matter, when saving files, you can select parts of your vector image and save only those selected areas, which brings us to...

A Must for Font Editors

One option *Convector* has that makes it an absolute must for font creators is the ability for you to define fine parts of the vector image for saving. What makes this particularly appealing is the capability to predefine these areas as either ASCII or Index numbers and the program will automatically save these files as FNT files for loading into a font editor. In other words, you can use a scanned image of a Dover Font, vectorize it and then save the entire font as individual CVG files to be loaded into a font editor for further manipulation. For those people who create fonts for fun or profit, this

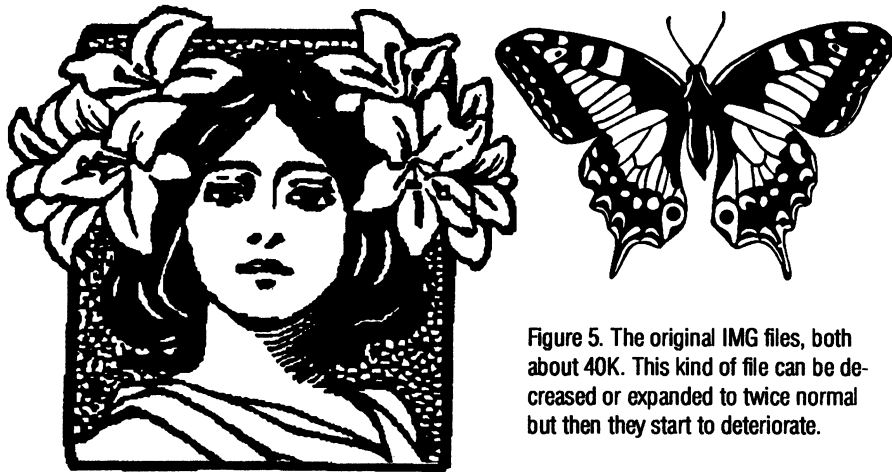


Figure 5. The original IMG files, both about 40K. This kind of file can be decreased or expanded to twice normal but then they start to deteriorate.



Figure 6. Take a good look. Which one of these vector files was done with bezier curves? On the ST with Bezier On took 21:25, Bezier Off took 1:24

is incredible. If your editor has global manipulation abilities (and all the better ones do) than you now have CVG files, ready to be globally shrunk or enlarged or whatever, ready to go. *Convector* is a "must get" program for those hardy font creators. (See the authors book "Schizophrenia And Font Creation, It's Cause And Cures" for more information on the specialized diseases of font creators). As someone who has created two sets of freeware fonts (see CN's PD library), I estimate that it took me 50 hours to create a font. *Convector* should considerably decrease that time.

Conclusion

I wish I could give the reader a one to one comparison of *Convector* *Avant Vector*, *Silhouette*, *Didot* and *ISD's Speedline*, but at the moment I can't. I can, however, say the following since I have run *Didot* and *Speedline* and, strictly from an auto-tracing point of view, neither is in the same class as *Convector*. On the TT, *Convector* is as fast as anything I have ever seen and that includes programs available on the Mac.

On the ST, *Convector* is a workable program but no speed demon. In figure six, the little lady took 21+ minutes to vectorize on the ST with the finest setting; with bezier off it took less than two minutes. Divide any result by ten and you can see how a TT with a math co-processor speeds things up. Once again, to be fair you must remember that these are 40K files. The butterfly took half the time even though the IMG file is the same size

Both *Speedline* and *Didot* are faster on the ST; however, *Didot* has very little control over the vectorization and *Speedline*, while giving more control, creates very cumbersome vector files, which sometimes will not print at all. To be fair, this only occurs with very large bitmap images and *ISD* will no doubt rectify this problem, but even so, these same files are no trouble for *Convector* and *Convector* does so much more. Furthermore, *Avant Vector*, *Silhouette*

and *Didot* are full featured Vector drawing programs while *Convector* is not.

One point about *Silhouette* should be mentioned. *Silhouette* has a manual assist option. This means just what it implies. As you are happily vectoring away, you can intervene and tell the program which way to go. I've never seen one of these options to be particularly useful unless the program doesn't do a good job without it. Since I haven't seen how this is implemented on *Silhouette*, I just thought I'd mention it.

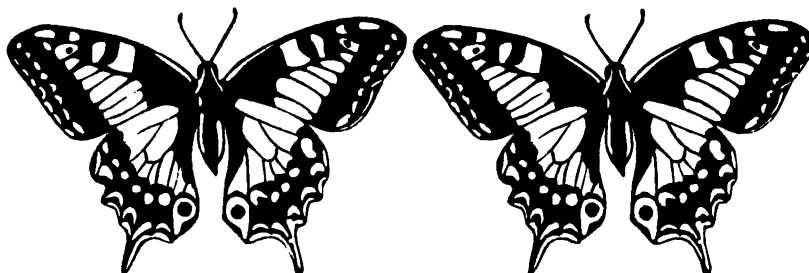


Figure 7. Vectorized butterfly's - With and without bezier curves. On this kind of image it may not be necessary to use beziers curves. Bezier On took 12:27, Bezier Off took :41

If you are into creating your own fonts, you shouldn't even waste any more time reading this review. Run out and grab the program. If you do a lot of bit image to vector conversions, then I highly recommend this program. If you intend to do extensive vector drawing and own no program at the moment, than I would suggest getting the demo's of *Avant Vector* and *Silhouette* before buying anything. If you have extra money, get *Convector* anyway. Personally, as a *Calamus SL* user, I'm going to stand pat with its vector module, *Outline Art* and *Convector*. *Speedline* is not in the same class as *Convector* and I'm not sure what is.

One final note on auto-tracing. No auto-tracing program will convert your photographs into vector files. I've read review after review of programs available on the Mac and IBM and attempts to do this, and they simply don't produce usable results. As far as this goes, *Convector* comes as close as anything to making this happen. I don't want to receive any phone calls from irate users telling me that their results were awful; however, I have vectorized some photographs and the results were awful. Surprisingly useless, but interesting. I would also like to say that *Gribnif*

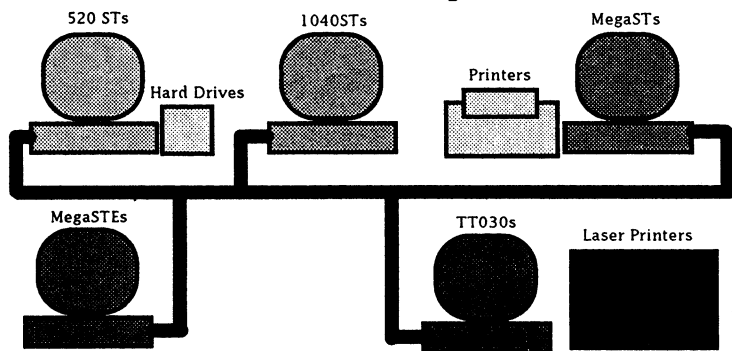
Software gives excellent support for its products, but I didn't find that out from this product. It didn't need any support.

Last and least, as you know I've been threatening to write a tutorial for users of *Calamus* and *Calamus SL*. I've been waiting for the update to SL to do this little task. Today, July 21st, I received the notice that my long awaited SL upgrade is ready and, as soon as I have the program, I will get to work, maybe.



Figure 8. Who was it who said you can't vectorize a photograph? Generally speaking vector files are much smaller than bit image files, with photographs we have a new ballgame. The above dithered halftone is a 12K file. The resulting vector file is over 100K. Another factor to be considered is that originally I used a 33K halftone, this resulted in a 300K vector file and Calamus could not handle this file. Calamus SL could. Unfortunately CN has not yet made the transition.

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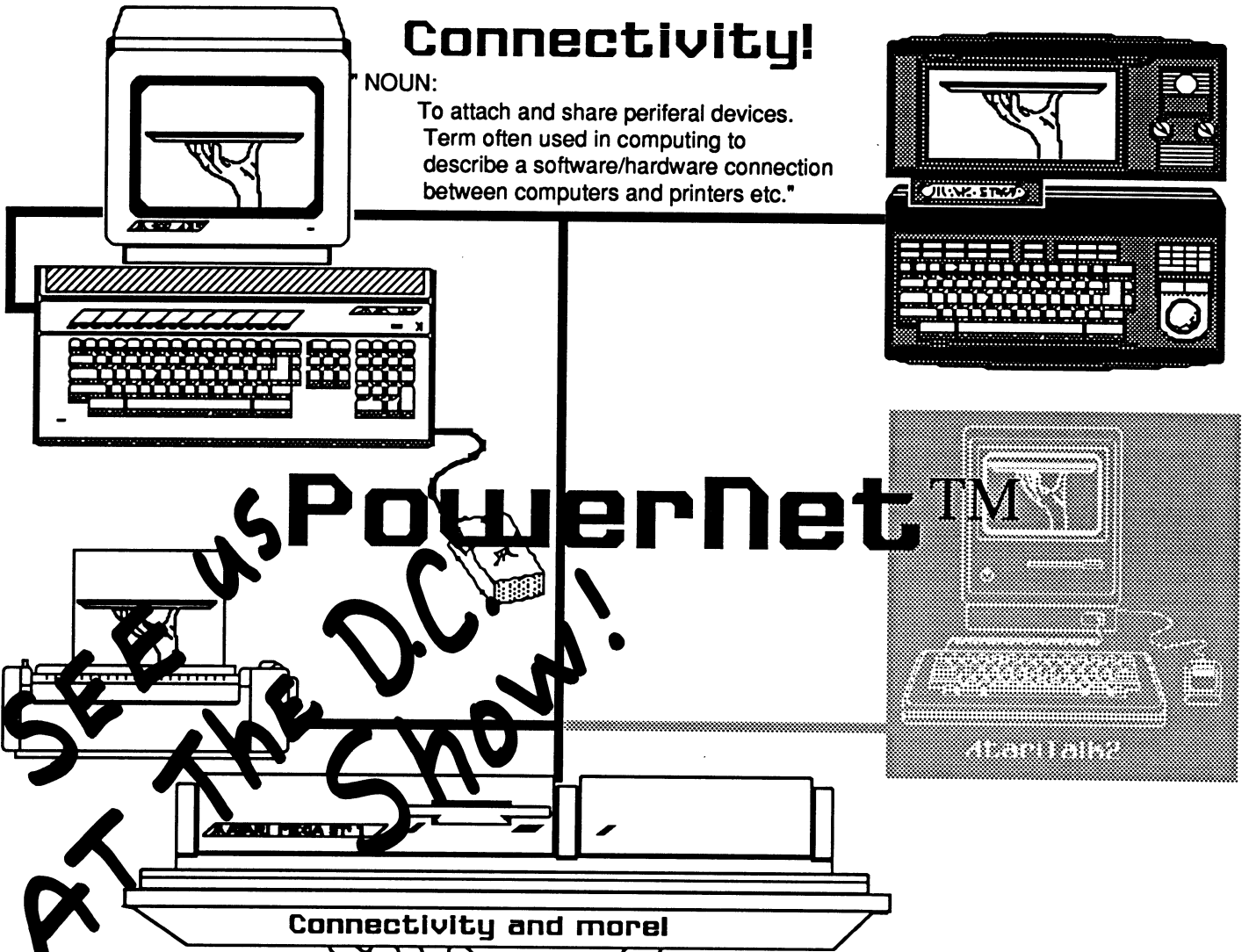
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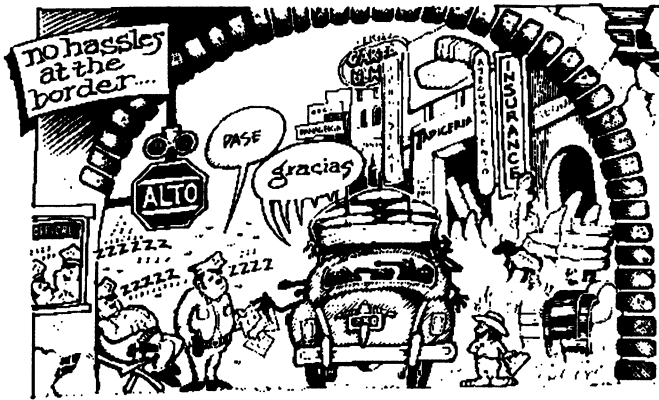
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In Search of the Golden Image Mouse

A Real Atari Trek to Naples

Review by James Parker

A Big Decision

I needed a replacement mouse for my old original, but was really aggravated with the cord always getting in the way or twisted up. I decided to get a cordless model, but hating to wait weeks for mail order to reach me, I first ventured to the Atari store in downtown Naples. Now, for those that have never been in Naples' traffic, let me just say this is a feat that requires great intestinal fortitude. Driving in Italy is unlike anything, anywhere, period.

A Soothing Drive

Drivers that are ahead of you seem to have all the patience in the world, while those behind you have none. There are street vendors on almost every corner who sell cigarettes, newspapers, tools, cassettes; you name it, they sell it. A driver will think nothing of stopping in the middle of the road to buy a pack of cigarettes from one of these guys. He blocks traffic, and all the cars behind him start blowing their horns. He takes his own sweet time, and when he's done, drives away. Meanwhile, the drivers behind him have gotten tired of waiting and have begun to pass him on BOTH sides, making extra lanes regardless of the oncoming traffic. At a traffic light, I've seen people get out of their car to walk back a couple of cars to talk to a friend. The light turns green, and the horns start immediately. The guy looks irritated, and saunters back to his car. This happens only when they actually STOP at a red light. Most of the time they run right through, not even bothering to slow down.

Another sight that takes getting used to is driving on the Tangenziale (Italy's expressway) and seeing a car either backing up because he missed his exit, or just plain driving the wrong way, flashing his lights and blowing his horn. Although the posted speed limits are strict, even by America's standards, no one pays any attention to them. BMW's, Mercedes, and Maserati's go flying by at over 100 miles an hour while little 2 cylinder Fiat's putt along in the other lanes. I guess it's not just when you get there that's important, it's who you pass on the way, too. The faster cars will

zoom up on your rear end and coast about 6 inches from your bumper, flashing their lights and honking their horns. This is THEIR lane, how dare you drive in it! If you don't immediately get over, they will pass you anywhere there is a hole. Exit and acceleration lanes are for wimps. You wait until the last possible second, and go screaming from the far left lane all the way over to the exit, just barely making it. This explains why so many have to back up on the expressway. Likewise, when entering the expressway, don't use the acceleration lane. You should have floored the gas pedal long before then. Just shoot all the way over to YOUR lane, and don't bother looking for oncoming cars. They will see you coming.

Then It Gets Worse

In town, the driving gets worse, not better. Imagine a road just wide enough to drive a Ford Pinto on. Now add no place to park, lots of one way streets, and thousands of motor scooters. If you can imagine that, you have a pretty good picture of what it's like in downtown Naples. Cars park on the sidewalks, in the road, or anywhere than can find a hole. Double and triple parking are common sights. No one stops at lights or stop signs. I just read that starting in August, all Naples traffic lights would be shutdown because the city could not afford to run them. Ha! What difference would it make?

The really funny part about this is it's *all true*. Making the trek to the Atari store is quite an ordeal. I never would have found it had it not been for my Italian friends who live next door. I found the number in the Yellow Pages (Yeah, they have 'em everywhere) and got my friend to call and get directions. After getting lost downtown, we had to ask directions several more times. You have to understand that streets are not laid out over here like they are in the states. Except for main roads, there are no street signs. House or building numbers? Are you kidding? Maybe a few here and there, but that's about it. With such a lack of signs and numbers, it's a wonder Italians get their mail at all!

Getting Closer

Meanwhile, we finally find the street, and even a few numbers on buildings. I triple park (when in Rome...) and we start looking for the store. No Fuji symbols anywhere. Not even any computer stores. Yes, this is the right street, and the right block. Wait, here's an apartment building with names on the buzzers... No way! It couldn't be in here! Way! It is! H.P. Informatica, second floor. Walking up the stairs to the second floor, I was sure this had to be a joke. I rang the doorbell, half expecting an Italian in a house robe and curlers to answer. Inside, it was indeed the Atari dealer for Naples. A TT sat on the desk alongside a SLM605 laser printer. A Mega ST and a Megafile 44 resided on another desk, with a SLM804 laser. They also had the new monochrome monitors, and they had SOUND! The vertical and horizontal screen adjustments were on the front also. Software was located on the other wall, and they had a Lynx display, although they seem to still be selling the older model. There was a variety of software, but not a huge selection. VIDI ST was available, as was Publisher ST, Cubase, Notator, Monkey Island, Space Ace, and others. The rest of the apartment was used for storage and repairs. If you didn't know exactly where the store was, you would never have found it. Nothing on the outside gave away that there was an Atari Computer dealer in the building. Even if you went walking through the building, right past the door, you would not have known. I guess they rely on the yellow pages and word of mouth for business.

Comparative Pricing

Prices are very high, compared to the states. The SLM605 laser printer goes for over \$1700. Software is just as expensive. Notator, which can be bought for about \$500 in the states, sells for about \$890 here. A Lynx game cartridge sells for \$66. After seeing that the price for a cordless mouse was over \$175, I decided I'd have to bite the bullet and take my chances with the U.S. Postal Service. So, I ordered one from D&P Computers for \$80. Two weeks later, I finally received my new rodent.

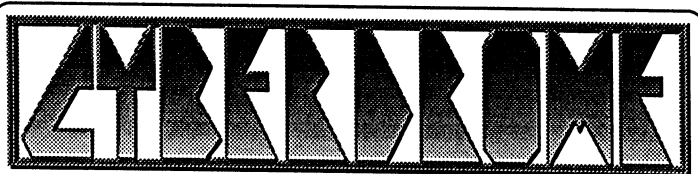
The Golden Image Cordless Mouse comes complete with 2 AAA batteries, 3 page manual (each page is in a different language), warranty card, mouse mat, and much to my surprise, Deluxe Paint from Electronic Arts. After installing the batteries, I plugged in the receiver, and was ready to go. Now, I'm no design genius, but wouldn't it have made more sense for Atari to put the mouse port on the CPU, and not on the side of the keyboard? Although I'm now cord free from the mouse to the keyboard, I still have a cord that runs out the side of my keyboard to the receiver. If I want to put the keyboard in my lap, the cord comes with it, not to mention the 2 inch connector that hangs out the

right side of it. Putting the mouse port on the CPU would have made things much neater. The mouse cords are long enough that even those with standard mice wouldn't have had a problem.

The mouse performs flawlessly, and has an auto-shutoff after 20 minutes of inactivity. After 5 minutes of inactivity, it automatically goes into a "standby" battery saving mode. Another nice feature of the mouse is the "Non-Linear Move Switch". Now, I'm not sure what that means (like calling a hammer an "inertia impact enhancer"), but pressing the button on the left side of the mouse causes it to track very slowly, or very quickly, depending on how fast you move it. It's like a mouse accelerator, but has the advantage of ultra fine control, which is needed for doing detail work in programs like Touch-Up, or Deluxe Paint. The mouse has a resolution of 200 DPI, and tracks very nicely. The range of the mouse is 5 feet from the receiver and at an angle of 45 degrees to the left or right.

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If you are in the market for a new mouse, the Golden Image Cordless is a fine replacement. With Deluxe Paint thrown in for free, it's the best deal in town.



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Power on the Move

Internal Battery for the STacy

Review by James Parker



There When You Need It

Finally! A task Atari couldn't or wouldn't do! For a little under \$100 you can have an internal battery for your STacy laptop. DragonWare touts the battery's ability to last for up to 2 hours on a single charge, and it does. I'll go over just how long it does last a little later.

The battery kit comes complete with the battery, installation cable and instructions. If you are not sure about opening your STacy up, have an authorized service center do it for you. The cable simply plugs into 2 pins on the circuit board, and is then routed up into the battery compartment. No soldering, cutting, or hoping that it will all fit back inside. Although it sounds very easy, the instructions warn you not to remove certain screws on the STacy, as there may be washers that could come loose and damage your computer. After installing the cable, place the two batteries into the battery compartment and plug it into the cable. With the batteries installed, the compartment cover will have a tight fit, and may need to be trimmed.

Two or Fourteen?

There are two methods of charging the battery, slow and fast. The slow charge takes a minimum of 14 hours, and the fast a minimum of two. Slow charging for over 14 hours will not harm the battery, but fast charging for over four hours will seriously damage the battery and the heat generated could damage your computer. The first charge after installation must be a slow charge. This is accomplished by connecting the standard power supply into the back of the STacy as you normally would. The fast charge is done by plugging the power supply into the fast charge jack inside the battery compartment. The manual does not recommend consistent fast charging as it will shorten battery life, and void the warranty. I have tried both methods of charging and both work as advertised, although the batteries get very warm while fast charging.

Once charged, the battery uses the STacy's battery metering light to let you know how much time you have left. This is a very nice touch, but is not to be totally trusted. I found it next to impossible to distinguish between the colors Red, Red-Yellow, and Yellow-Red. To me, the light went from red to yellow. When the battery light is yellow, the battery is dead, while Yellow-Red indicates about 10 minutes left. I just time how long I run on batteries, and when I start

to get close to 2 hours (depending on how the STacy is setup, i.e. backlight on full, hard drive parked or running etc.) I save frequently. The manual offers some suggestions to make the battery life last longer. The best way to extend the life of your battery is to use Atari's *Mouse Accelerator 3.3*, which has an Auto park and back-light off timer for the STacy. The STacy pulls power from the battery up to 95% slower when the hard disk and back light are off. It also recommends to avoid using the floppy drive, as it increases drain from the battery by up to 85% when in use. Unfortunately, emulators like Spectre GCR or AT Speed can cut battery time in half. This is because the software can't turn off the back light or park the hard drive.

If You Travel a Lot

The big question is, do you need battery power? I travel quite a bit and spend a lot of time in airports and on planes. Every airport I have been in has electrical outlets in the waiting areas. The power supply that comes with the STacy is multi-voltage, so with the right adapter, just plug it in and go. This may seem like a pain, but if you are going to be waiting any length of time, a few minutes to plug in is not a big deal. Naturally, once on the plane, you have no choice but to use your battery, and the STacy fits perfectly on the trays that fold out of the seats in front of you. Once you arrive, you can again use line current. The only time I have used the battery is while flying. All other places like your hotel, the airport, work, and home will have power. If you don't fly regularly, you may not need battery power. But, one strong argument makes me glad I bought the battery kit. If you are running on line current and the power fails, you have a battery backup! There is no loss of power to the computer, and you can keep on chugging away until the batteries die or the power comes back on. If you need more than two hours of power, Carter Graphics and Computers sell a five-hour external battery brick for the STacy, and even include a car lighter adapter, recharger, and padded case. It sells for \$199.

Two It Is

Now for the long and short of it. Just how long does the battery last? The back cover of the manual reads "Up to two hours of running time!" I have found this to be an accurate statement. While some reports say over two hours, or even up to three hours, this is

not the case. The following is a list of tests and the total running time of the battery.

Tests

1. Backlight on, low intensity: 1 hour, 25 minutes. (No floppy access, hard drive auto park 5 minutes, screen saver active.)
2. Backlight off, no floppy access: 2 hours. (Hard drive auto park 5 minutes, screen saver active.)
3. Backlight on, full intensity: 1 hour, 15 minutes. (No floppy access, hard drive auto park 5 minutes screen saver active.)

Dragonware also offers additional battery packs and an external charger if you should need more power. They have filled a niche in the Atari market very well, indeed. Is it worth it? To me, every penny.

[DragonWare Software, P.O. Box 1719, Havre MT 59501-1719, Tele:(406)-265-9609. Carter Graphics & Computers, 520N. 200 E., Washington, UT 84780, Tele:(801)-628-6111.]

James Parker is a professional musician currently stationed with the U.S. Navy 6th Fleet Band in Naples, Italy. Although his wife has a different opinion, he is saving up to buy a 68030 accelerator board for his Mega STe. He has been involved with Atari computers and user groups since 1984.

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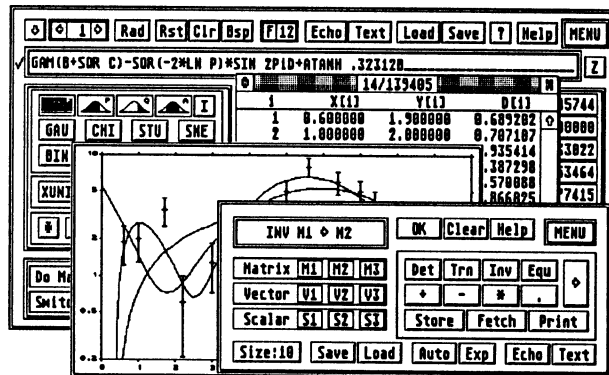


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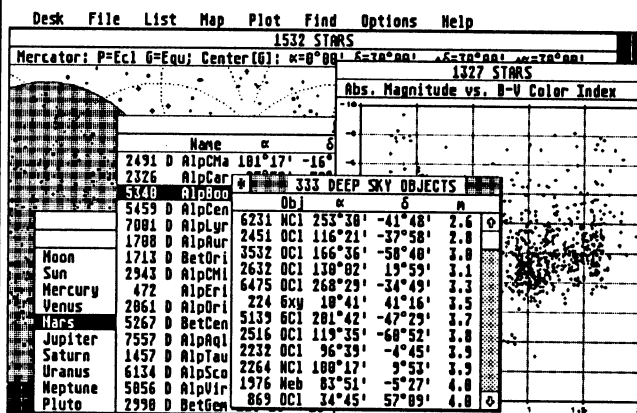


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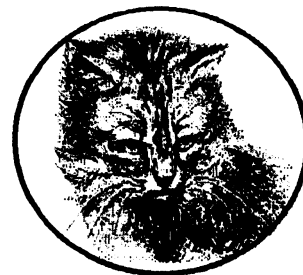
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The
Junkyard
Pussycat
by John Barnes

Software Sells Machines



Once again, the marketplace is all a-twitter with expectations of new hardware from Atari. From the information being spread all over the place, it appears that Atari's engineering wizards have put together a fine piece of hardware in the new Falcon 030.

The hardware specifications have been widely published (see, for example the September 1992 *Current Notes*, pp 8 & 9) and they have generated a lot of excitement, as it appears that the Falcon is pretty much up to date in this respect.

Much less is being said about software, in spite of the fact that hardware does not sell itself any more. *Software sells hardware*. Back in the days when personal computers were a novelty, users were content to see software development lag behind hardware advances. Nowadays, however, people will not buy a computer if they cannot get software to do the jobs they want to do. Worse yet, the agonized screams of people who already have substantial investments in software accompany every new upgrade.

Even neophytes expect to have plenty of things to play with as soon as they finish taking their new machines out of the boxes.

This seems like as good a time as any to suggest ways that Atari can make their new product attractive to people who have never owned one of Atari's 680x0 based machines. Atari has been notably skimpy in this area in the past, and a break with this tradition would be a real morale booster for the legions of new dealers that Atari hopes to recruit.

Load 'Em Up

Almost any clone that is sold these days comes with a pile of software. It is usually not the top drawer stuff, but it is enough to give the user something to practice with.

While the Pussycat does not know all of the business details on this, there are surely ways to make the purchaser of a new Falcon feel that he is getting in on the ground floor of something big. There are even ways for the Tramiels to do this in a manner that somewhat approximates their idea of what things ought to cost.

First of all, put in lots of leaflets, one for each reasonable product now on the Atari commercial market. Describe products like *Word Perfect*, *Touch-Up*, *Image Cat*, *Mug Shot*, *Flash*, *dBMAN*, *Superbase*, *LDW*

Power, Cover the whole spectrum of commercial productivity software and games. There is not even any real need to verify that the stuff actually works because the user will not be running these products in any case. The Pussycat remembers how impressed he was when 100 or so leaflets tumbled out as he unpacked the Apple CD ROM drive for his system at the office.

Second, put in disks with demonstration versions of products like *DynaCADD*, *Calamus*, *Calligrapher*, etc. The object is to provide a representative sampling. The choices should be made in such a fashion as to inspire awe. Machines that have such powerful software in their repertory must be very powerful, indeed. There is no need to supply documentation, a short guide with a tutorial on disk should be adequate.

If the authors of these programs are willing to have the demos downloaded from the online services, they should surely be willing to have Atari package them with new machines. The burden of preparing the hundreds of thousands of disks required might be a problem, and Atari might have to pick up the tab for the disk duplicating.

Next, include a couple of real applications. These could be selected from the vast library of available shareware and Atari could make bulk purchase deals with the authors. The authors could incorporate registration forms for more advanced versions into the bundled versions, which might have some of their functionality limited.

Finally, Atari should seed the development of new software. Perhaps they can do this by subcontracting for specific software products like CPX modules or desk accessory applications. They should come to terms with successful software developers for packages that can be bundled with the new machines. Such developers have to be given the sense that they will get worthwhile rewards if Atari is successful.

Point to After-the-Sale Support

It would certainly be desirable to let the new purchaser know that there are places he can expect support after the sale. Sign-up offers for CIS, Delphi, and GENIE should be included in the package, along with working versions of *QuickCIS* and *ST Aladdin*, just to get the user hooked on the support provided by the online services.

Introductory offers for all of the Atari magazines should be included. A free year of *Atari Explorer* should be available via postcard. This gives the purchaser an impression of vitality in the user base.

The registry of user groups should be screened to weed out the ones that are no longer viable, the contact names should be updated, and the whole business put into a small booklet to be included in the package.

Capture the Names

The registration cards for purchasers of these machines should be filled in by the dealer and the results should be captured on a database. This database should be made available to all valid commercial interests in the community for the purpose of promoting their products. This is needed to provide an infrastructure for direct mail advertising. Each piece of direct mail that comes into a user's home is a reaffirmation of the validity of his purchase decision.

If an outfit like Toad Computers can find the resources to do this in an efficient manner surely Atari ought to be able to do so as well.

Share the Lifeboat

These kinds of collaboration have been seldom practiced in the Atari marketplace. The Titanic has, however, gone down and everyone is sharing the same lifeboat. The rollout of the Falcon promises to generate as much excitement as shooting off 100 rescue rockets.

The proposals outlined above require substantial effort that is not directly related to writing software. The developer community has to get together and establish a standardized format for the leaflets, the magazines have to prepare offers and ads. Atari has to make room for the stuff in its packages.

The user groups have to get their act together. The shareware authors have to whip their products into shape.

The direct benefits of all of this are probably as difficult to predict as the casting of bread upon the waters was in the biblical parable.

All too often we have seen people in the Atari community take the view expressed by "I'll be damned if I advertise my product only to have the customer buy from someone else." The small size of the market encourages this kind of thinking, but the market will never get any bigger if people keep thinking along such narrow lines.

There have been some isolated instances of collaboration in recent months. Atari has become more open about their documentation. In the former Soviet Union this openness was called *glasnot*, and we have all seen the changes that were brought about.

The former Soviet Union analogy is apt in yet another way—rebuilding the Atari society will take effort on everyone's part. No one entity possesses the means to effect the required restructuring on its own.

The Costs

In order for these proposals to work their cost has to be kept below about \$50 per machine. The entry cost to an individual developer or publisher should not be much more than the cost of a full page magazine ad. The costs can be spread out over some time because Atari does not plan to fire off both barrels of the shotgun at once.

This means that the material can be prepared in small batches of one or two thousand units for test marketing and evaluation. One hopes that the response will be enough to trigger production and sales of 100,000 units or so, in which case the prospective gain will become well worth the risk.

A New Tomorrow

Over the next several months the community will be watching for signs that the community can regain the vigor that it possessed in those halcyon days when the ST line was first introduced.

Many costly mistakes were made in that era. There was a big tendency to expect that Atari would do it all. There was a fervent belief that "Atari knows best." The players in that game have grown more mature now. One can hope that they now understand that the market has many niches and that those who occupy those niches are the ones who can cope with the demands of their own environments.

Atari makes fine hardware—they are fulfilling that promise by making something that should be even finer. There are able people in the developer community. They must be nurtured and encouraged to produce their best. There are fine people in the user community, they must be inspired to carry the message to the four winds.

There are some indications in Bill Rehbock's online conferences that Atari is being more open in encouraging outsiders than it has been in the past. This tendency needs to be expanded into full working partnerships that recognize the value of the contributions of the software publishers and of the other allies who aid Atari in its cause.

The new hardware, targeted on new markets, encouraging the opening of new horizons in software, provides a vehicle that may allow everyone a fresh start. Let us not drop the ball this time.

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by Rick Reaser

Comparing GEnie and CIS

From L.A. to L.A.

This month I'm typing my column in Montgomery, Alabama. You see, I've moved from L.A. to L.A. (That's Los Angeles to Lower Alabama.) I just hope that my computer doesn't start to corrode from all the humidity.

As I mentioned last month, I am attending the Air Force's Air Command and Staff College for the next 10 months. We are in the writing phase of the curriculum and if any of this stuff I'm learning sinks in (which I hope it does), this column and my editing of other peoples submissions should improve drastically. (Maybe *Current Notes* should reimburse the government for part of this fine training, Joe Waters.) [The government is already taking enough money from *CN*, thank you! - JW]

The most amazing thing about all these moves I have been going through is that all my computer equipment still works. This is a true testament to Atari Corporation, ICD, the other companies that have made things that plug into my 8-bit system. I had a few heart palpitations with respect to my hard drive, but it is working great now.

Elsewhere in This Issue

Joining us this month is Albert Baggetta with a real-world story about using Atari 8-bits in school. Al has been programming in BASIC for about 10 years. He started with the Texas Instrument TI 994/A computer and then graduated up to the Atari line of computers. He has programmed games and application programs published in *START*, *ANALOG*, *ANTIC* and *ST LOG*, over the last few years. (His articles have also appeared in *CN*.) He is the owner and sole employee of Baggetta-Ware software, producing educational computer programs for children of all ages. Al's most well-know effort is the *Eliemouse Complimentary Coloring Book* for young children—an ST program that allows youngsters to magically color on screen.

John Sandgren joins us again with some tips that will make your computer easier to use. John showed his SpartaDOS X menu system described in his article at one of the 8-bit SIG meetings in Colorado Springs. He's nice enough to share its secrets with us this month.

A new face, Roger Meston, reviews the game *FRED*. Roger is a computer engineer by trade. His

daytime activities include keeping the big mainframes that control our nation's satellites in line. He is always happy to get home at night and use a *real* computer, like his 256XL or highly modified ST. I left Roger the 8-bit SIG in Colorado (for which he is eternally grateful). He's also working on a few other articles for *CN*, which will be appearing soon.

Finally, our most regular *CN* contributor, Charles Cole writes yet another review of another great Computer Software Services product, the *Quintopus*. I'm very grateful to Charles for writing all these articles.

Fidonet

Larry Black, National Atari 8-bit Echo Moderator has provided the current list of Bulletin Board Systems (BBSs) on the Echo. As promised last month, this list is in table 1. I recently was able to convince my local Fidonet Net Hub to add the Atari 8-bit Echo to his BBS, so my BBS is shown in the table as well. You ought to try to get your local Fidonet BBS SysOp to add the 8-bit Echo to his board. That way we can breathe more life into the Echo and share even more ideas and information. There are 28 Fidonet BBSs within the local Montgomery/Prattville area in my calling radius! This is quite amazing to me. Both L.A.s are heavy into computers.

If you are looking for Fidonet BBSs in your area, I can get that information to you. Ask me by regular mail, GEnie, CompuServe or the Internet. Be sure to include your area code with your request.

I've only been back on Fidonet for a few days and activity has been brisk. Subjects have ranged from MyDOS to memory upgrades. Someone is working on a cartridge switcher. There was also a discussion of a patch to DOS 2.5 that allows it to use Ultra Speed Sector skew.

Every once in awhile, an ST user stumbles into the 8-bit Echo by accident. It's easy to do. We 8-biters need to be more tolerant when that happens. (i.e. Don't be rude.) With the introduction of the Falcon, STers could be in the same situation as we 8-biters. If the Falcon takes off, Atari will eventually discontinue the ST like they did the XE. We need to be sympathetic.

The Internet

I am still working on getting an Internet account. I finally got a copy of one of the books I mentioned last

Table 1: Internet BBS Names, Phone Numbers.

Zone:					
Net/Node	BBS Name	City, State	SysOp Name	Phone Number	Comments
1:373/2	Gateway	Huntsville AL	John Emmert	205-880-7723	9600 HST V32b V42b
1:375/1	StarScan (sm)	Montgomery AL	Tom Jones	205-279-7313	9600 HST V32b V42b
1:389/3	The Gameing BBS!	Jonesboro AR	Gary Edwards	501-932-7355	9600 HST
1:103/180	The Motherboard BBS!	Garden Grove CA	Bob Charles	714-971-6273	9600 HST V32
1:203/69	Humanx Commonwealth	Sacramento CA	Smokey Layton	916-737-1844	9600 HST
1:3603/100	Tampa Bay Oracle	Clearwater FL	Andy Lucht	813-539-8599	2400
1:3608/4	Insert Name Here	Lynn Haven FL	Mike Duane	904-265-0546	2400
1:363/320	The Silver Meteor	Orlando FL	Max Vonderhorst	407-823-8147	9600 HST V32b V42b
1:369/35	The InterZone Cafe	Pembroke Pines FL	Peter Stewart	305-436-1085	9600 HST V42b
1:3603/20	Mercury Opus NEC3603	St Petersburg FL	Emery Mandel	813-321-0734	9600 HST V32b V42b
1:3608/1	221B Baker St	Panama City FL	James Young	904-871-6536	9600 HST V42b
1:3608/5	Computer Country	Panama City FL	Chuck Seehuetter	904-769-9431	9600 HST
1:3608/121	The BEJUE	Panama City FL	Larry Black	904-769-9688	9600 V32 V42b
1:133/308	Information Overload	Riverdale GA	Ed June	404-471-1549	9600 HST
1:280/102	Lawrence Online	Lawrence KS	Tom Miller	913-841-2757	9600 V32 V42b
1:3817/14	The Starship BBS	Fort Polk LA	Rich Tietjens	318-535-9684	9600 V32b V42b
1:322/327	MSI SW BBS	Framingham MA	Reed Lewis	508-626-2481	9600 HST
1:101/1	The Rainbow's Edge	Westwood MA	Jim Greely	617-551-0495	9600 HST
1:101/106	The Magic Boards	Swampscott MA	HAL DuPrie	617-595-5626	9600 HST V32b V42b
1:282/47	FlightLine BBS	Minneapolis MN	Craig Peterson	612-544-5118	9600 HST V32b V42b
1:151/1000	REDCON	Raleigh NC	Amnon Nissan	919-859-3353	9600 HST
1:151/1003	Shalom-3	Raleigh NC	Amnon Nissan	919-851-3858	9600 HST
1:278/713	Fordham Jesuit BBS	Bronx NY	Fr Nick Lombardi	212-579-2869	9600 HST V32
1:2608/99	Country Corners	Fulton NY	Jeanie Gulliver	315-598-2075	9600 HST V42b
1:260/343	The Meeting Place	Syracuse NY	Rick Ellison	315-433-0916	2400
1:13/13	Backbone Collection	Bensalem PA	George Peace	215-638-8367	9600 HST
1:268/202	NePa BBS	Berwick PA	David Clark	717-759-1693	9600 HST
1:270/311	P/T BBS	Cleona PA	Richard Kuchar	717-272-6935	9600 HST V42b
1:376/50	Dreadnaught Class	Columbia SC	Julius Edwards	803-731-3884	9600 V32 V42b
1:3615/17	KAUG BBS	Knoxville TN	Mary Pinckard	615-691-0113	2400
1:3615/1	3615 NEC	Louisville TN	NEC & Hub Mail Only	615-977-7359	9600 HST V32b V42b
1:124/1016	Psychlo Empire	Irving TX	Mark Corona	214-251-1175	9600 HST
1:383/300	Animal House III	San Angelo TX	David Wong	915-942-9350	9600 V32b V42b
1:387/307	Quantum Leap	San Antonio TX	Mike Mazzola	512-333-5360	9600 HST V32b

month from the library. The User's Directory of Computer Networks by Tracey L. LaQuey (ed.) is an interesting book. Be warned that you probably need to be a full-fledged, pencil-necked computer techno-geek to understand all of it. I did learn that MILNET is a part of the Internet so if I get an account through work on the Defense Data Network, I will automatically have access to the Internet.

For those of you who can't get an Internet account through school or work, Oscar Fowler posted a list of commercial access points for the Internet on GENie in file #5592. In most cases, you have to pay for the access, so you would need to take that into consideration.

Speaking of GENie, GENie started to provide access to the Internet on August 3. It's starting out as an open beta test for all GENie members. Apparently, the UNIX roundtable on GENie did the pioneering work. This is great news for Atari 8-biters on GENie since there is a lot of 8-bit activity on the Internet.

GENie subscribers can now send GE Mail messages to individuals connected to the Internet. Individuals on the Internet also have the ability to send E-mail messages to GENie subscribers. The messages appear in your GE Mail mailbox and look like any other GE Mail message. One composes a message for an Internet recipient using the same available methods as for GEmail. This is the same modus operandi as on CompuServe.

A GENie subscriber sends a message to a person on the Internet by using the person's standard Internet address (instead of a GENie address) followed by "INET#." You cannot use the GE Mail "REPLY" command to reply to Internet messages (unlike CompuServe). That would be a great feature to add since some of the people on the Internet have extremely long addresses. Someone on Internet can send a message to a GENie subscriber by addressing it to that person's normal GENie address followed by

“GENIE.GEIS.COM.”

Internet access requires a separate GENie's Internet Mail Service subscription. This is slightly different than CompuServe which essentially charges by the character or by connect time depending on the billing option you have with them.

The billing rates are also somewhat complicated (but not as much as CompuServe). First there is a \$9.95 subscription fee per month. This subscription fee includes unlimited inbound messages, but there is a 40 cent fee per outbound message. GENie's hourly connect charges apply during prime time in addition to the Internet Mail Service fees.

There is a separate area on GENie with detailed Internet information to include sign up. It is on page 207. You can get to page 207 by typing “internet” or “m207” at a main prompt. Check it out!

What Else is New on GENie?

Activity in the GENie libraries has been phenomenal this past month. Here are just a few highlights. In addition to the *Atari Explorer Online*, *ST Report* is now available to 8-bit users in the ARCD format. Most of the information in these two publications is geared towards STs, but there may be some items of interest. Chuck Steinman uploaded a modification to his popular TransKey modification (#5944). Craig S. Thom uploaded a color graphics system for *BobTerm*, which I haven't tried to run yet (#5962). (Good topic for a review. Any volunteers?) Ray Wilmott gives us *RELAX.DCM* (#5952) an outstanding digitized voice demo that lasts for about a full minute!! Wow! Jeff Potter uploaded a file that contains the information and programs to make a do-it-yourself Musical Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI) for our Atari Classic (#5969). A couple of good new TurboBasic programs are also available. The GENie 8-bit library is hopping!

What's New on CompuServe?

Compared to GENie, there weren't many new files posted on CompuServe (CIS) this past month. However, all Info-Atari8 Digests from the Internet have been cross-posted and they are full of fascinating information. I highly recommend downloading as many of these gems that your wallet can stand. These Info-Atari8 Digests haven't been posted to GENie for quite sometime, so CIS is the principle source for those not on the Internet or Usenet.

Some of the non-Internet files include *ST-Report* (also available on GENie) and an X10 Powerhouse program modification for those of you with the X10 home security system (X10V14.ARC). Most of the activity on CIS has been in the message base area which is always a hot bed of activity.

GENie and CompuServe (CIS):

Comparisons and Contrasts

Now that I've been on both GENie and CompuServe for a little while, I thought I'd share my thoughts regarding the strengths and weaknesses of these information services. First, let me say that it is my opinion that every Atari 8-bitter should belong to one or both of these services. They are indispensable. Which service you pick, if you don't pick both, really depends on what you are trying to get from the service. I use them like a reporter, looking for 8-bit tidbits to bring to you. So my perspective is slightly different than that of the average person. I really would like a regular person to write a full blown comparison in the future. (Hint.) In spite of that, here are my impressions, so far, of Atari 8-bit support on both.

Mail

GENie mail is cheap. With Basic Services, you get all the mail you can stand for \$4.95 a month. GENie mail is slightly easier to use than CIS. CIS mail isn't difficult to use, but GENie is easier. Attaching a file to GENie mail is simple. On GENie it is possible to see who a letter is from, without reading the letter first when you have just one letter in your mailbox. You have to pay extra to see if someone got your letter on CIS, while it's free on GENie. Both services now allow Internet mail, but as far as I can tell, CIS is cheaper unless you intend to do a ton of it.

Speed

CIS is much faster than GENie. Period. Everything from logon to menu selections is speedier by a wide margin on CIS.

Protocols

GENie has better file transfer protocols than CIS in my opinion. GENie has Y-Modem batch, which is a real time saver. I've had several problems with CIS X-Modem (which is not CRCed, BTW). The whole file transfer process in terms of user interface is simply cleaner on GENie.

Menus

CIS wins here. The menus are shorter, easier to understand, and simple compared to GENie.

8-bit Message Bases

GENie is really a mess compared to CIS. There are just two many bases and the user interface to them is much more complicated than CIS. On CIS, there are fewer message bases and they are easier to use. There also appears to be a lot more activity in the CIS bases than on GENie.

SysOp Support

Lately, this has improved slightly in GENie, but GENie has along way to go to catch up with CIS. The CIS SysOps are totally on top of things and incredibly responsive. They post bulletins when new great files are posted and participate heavily in the message bases.

8-bit Libraries

GENie dominates this area by far. There are many more uploads and more interesting files and programs available on GENie than CompuServe. On the other hand, CIS has all the Info-Atari8 Digests. The user interface to the GENie library is also cleaner. GENie provides two line as well as detailed file descriptions, unlike CIS. It is easier to see in GENie which files are new since you last visited. GENie has file numbers in addition to names, which are very handy. You can download multiple files easily with Y-Modem batch using the file numbers and even walk away from your computer.

Summary

You may argue with me on the fine points. What's intuitive to me may be problematic for you and vice versa. The bottom line for me is that I need both services and neither dominates the other. I'd appreciate your views and hope that someone out there will write a comprehensive article on this subject.

Atari Classics (AC) 8-Bit Magazine Update

By now you've heard that at least the first issue of AC is in production. An excerpt from the news release to this effect was in last month's issue. You may have even seen a copy of AC by now. Ben Poehland informs me that AC and Unicorn Publications are targeting to have the first issue published in time for the Washington Area Atari Computer Enthusiasts (WAACE) festival in October.

At this time, about 70% of the staff positions are filled for AC. The first issue, which will be free to campaign participants, should be 32-34 pages in length. Ben is concentrating on quality content rather than glitz.

After this initial issue, there will be about two months for people to send in their subscriptions. From that point, issues will be dated with even months and distributed the month prior. So the second issue, if there are enough subscriptions, will have a February 1993 date and start circulation in January 1993.

As side note, I was the first official subscriber, having sent in my check for the magazine and disk ahead of everyone else. Hopefully, AC will get enough support to survive.

Best Electronics Catalog Update

I received my Best Electronics catalog update and believe me there was more in there than the mind can comprehend. Best is now selling some European games to include, *FRED*, *ZYBEX*, *Scary School*, *Mirax Force*, *Ninja Commando*, *Stack Up*, *Hawkquest*, *Mission Shark*, *Cavernia*, and *Draconus*. Best has the sheet feeder for the XDM121 printer for \$49.95! This catalog is a "must have." To get a copy, send \$3.67 to: Best Electronics, 2021 The Alameda, Suite 290, San Jose, CA 95126-1127. (408) 243-6950

TextPRO+ Version 5 Update Update Update

Ronnie Riche is just about recovered from Hurricane Andrew. There is one minor bug to fix in the beta test version. Ronnie will mail the beta test version out to all the registered users in a few days. He will need feedback on it prior to putting out the final version after Christmas. That will give the beta testers a few months to check out the program. A copy of the beta test version will, undoubtedly, appear on GENie and CompuServe.

Remaining ICD 8-bit Items

I spoke to the folks at ICD on August 13, 1992 to see what was left and here's the list:

Manuals for everything (lots) – \$5.95 to \$9.95

SpartaDOS Construction Kits (30 left) – \$19.95

P:R: Connections (50 left) – \$44.95

FlashBack! (50 left) – \$14.95

MAC 65 Toolkits (30 left) – \$14.95

Assorted Modem and printer cables (lots) – \$7.95

Contact ICD at: ICD, Inc., 1220 Rock Street, Rockford, IL 61101-1437. Phone: (815) 968-2228.

Maze of Agdadon Update

Jeff Potter now has a working two player version of the *Maze of Agdadon* (see CN July issue). It will be uploaded to the GENie Game Developer's Area (something we "normal" people don't have access to) where it will undergo evaluation by the experts. Jeff is now trying to get the program modified to be able to handle 8 players, which presents some timing challenges.

Plans are still to try and make the game into a cartridge. Chuck Steinman has all the equipment and parts to pull that off. I'll keep you posted as things develop. Won't it be great to have a "MidiMaze" for our 8-bits.

That's it for this month. Write, call or E-mail your requests, questions or complaints to:

Rick Reaser

2427 D Meadow Ridge Lane

Montgomery, AL 36117-4616

GENie: R.REASERJR1

CompuServe: 72130,2073



FRED

by Roger D. Meiston

The Modern Stoneage Caveman

Mostly Good Things: *Fred* is a fairly new game from Europe that pits you and Fred against the odds. It is very refreshing to see this level of effort still being accomplished on our beloved 8-bit systems. The graphics are first rate. With scads of colors, detailed participants and

Poor Fred. Through some supernatural twist of events, Fred has single-handedly disproved the evolutionary model and bypassed eons of development. He has mental capacities far superior to his fellow cave-men (or, to be more correct, cavepersons, as there must have been some cave-babes around) and has used them to develop all sorts of clever inventions. Being the cerebral type, Fred has little use for hunting or farming, and prefers to spend his time watching the world revolve and wondering all of the whys, wheres and whens that these type of people tend to contemplate. In his copious free time, he has invented everything from shields to snorkels. Alas, all of this thinking, observing and inventing has left our hero somewhat starved for conversation.

So off he goes, in search of some meaningful use for his inventions. To his dismay, however, he finds that the world outside the clan is somewhat less than inviting. In fact, it's downright hostile out there! Less than 100 yards from the cave, he is attacked by the biggest frog he has ever seen. Luckily he had the incredible good fortune (Is this an unbelievable coincidence or what?) to have packed some rocks and, in a typically neanderthal manner, dispatches the slimy little beast with one well-timed toss.

Whew, that was close! Now we better get going. Oops, a second frog, then a third, challenge the health and general well-being of our intrepid hero. Frogs, frogs and more frogs, and then birds, bats, and snakes all descend on poor Fred. He is running real low on rocks when he remembers something else he built, the fluorocarbon-free, low sodium, Killsall bug eliminator mist in an easy to use spray can with the dripless nozzle! (Quite a fortuitous turn of events, eh?)

Sure enough, he picks up this curiously handy weapon, points it in the general direction of the multi-legged antagonist and, presto! The little beggar drops dead at his feet. Soon, however, he finds that there are more enemies than defenses, and he will have to use his most cherished possession, his brain! Yes, it does come in handy when one is jumping frogs, dodging birds and trying not to fall into the river, all at the same time.

Ah yes, the river. How does a poor little cave man get across that? Every time he tries to swim, he does his best anchor imitation. Wait a minute, what was that we said back in paragraph one? That's right! A snorkel! That's just what Fred needs. He puts it on and....

a snappy sound track, which can be traded in for sound effects instead. This one is a real keeper. After several hours of "software testing," I was actually able to get past level one, and pick up a few bonus points to boot. (By the way, some of the "junk" you pick up in level one comes in real handy in level two).

Some Not So Hot Things: The only real drawback to this game was the response time of the title character. He moves in a rather sloth-like manner which is, I suppose, a natural occurrence in cave-men, but tends to get a little tedious. I found myself hollering at Fred to "hurry up!" Also, the manner in which you tell Fred to jump, run, throw or whatever is not intuitively obvious. He can certainly do all those things, but it does take some trial and error, not to mention practice to really get the hang of it.

One Word of Warning! One little known fact about this game is sure to really upset 810 owners; the disk is an enhanced density disk! Nowhere, in any advertisement, have I seen a warning about this fact. A quick check shows that only half the disk is even formatted, so it is obviously either an oversight or a marketing decision. In any case, be aware that you need a 1050/XF551-type disk drive to load this program.

The Bottom Line: With only the very few concerns mentioned above, I would heartily recommend this game. It promises to provide hours of entertainment, intrigue and just plain fun. The price is right, the game is quite addicting and it is environmentally correct. What more could you ask for?

For more information about ordering this fine game, contact: K.O. Distributors, 333 Peninsula Drive, Lake Almanor, CA 96137. (916) 596-4159. GENie: S.HOFFEE2, Price: \$10.00.

Fred is also available from: Best Electronics, 2021 The Alameda, Suite 290, San Jose, CA 95126-1121. (408) 243-6950
Price: \$19.95.

You can get demo versions of *Fred*, and another great game called *Mission Shark* (no, it's neither a fishing game, nor a "creative financing" course) from GENie (file #5533). It plays exactly like the full blown version of the game, but only for a limited amount of time.

P.S. In the July/August issue of *CN*, Rick Reaser mentioned that there are some "cheat" codes for *Fred*. Well, Steve Hoffee, if you're reading this, I am ready for those codes!

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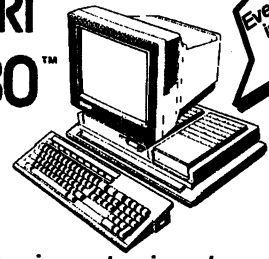
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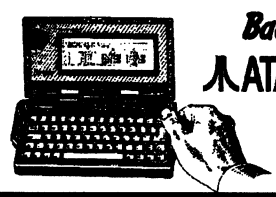
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Making Batch Files Work for You

Getting the Most From Your Atari 8-Bit

by John Sandgren

Adding a hard drive and a 3.5" floppy drive to my 130XE did nothing to help me use the computer better, or smarter. All they did was give me more storage and faster access. After bootup, the computer still sat there, waiting for me to give it instructions. But my computer at work (an early IBM clone) was really smart; it gave me a menu of options, and each option selected usually gave me another menu. Real professional!

Irritated that my super deluxe Atari 8-bit was still dumb, I decided to find out why my computer at work was friendly. What I found was intelligent use of batch files by the manager from whom I inherited the IBM clone. My predecessor had created batch files to manage a dumb user through a series of popular application options, such as word processing and data base management. Each option selected was really a batch command that manipulated subdirectories and executed .COM files. My SpartaDos X has batchfile capability, so why couldn't I use batch files the same way?

The rest of this article describes what I did to make my computer work for me. It is aimed at SpartaDos X and SpartaDOS users. Users of other operating systems might find some parts of the article useful, however, so please read on.

After taking an inventory of all the principal programs I use with my computer, I created a menu text file. I used the SpartaDOS X method with "COPY CON: MENUTXT" followed by a [CTRL]+[3]. SpartaDOS 3.2 users would substitute an "E:" for the "CON." You could also use a word processor, and save the resulting text in ASCII. A sample menu might look like this:

MENU

- A. WORD PROCESSING
- B. DATA BASE PROGRAM
- C. PRINT POWER
- D. TELECOMMUNICATIONS
- E. GAMES
- F. GRAPHICS PROGRAMS

ENTER "-" AND SELECTION

To make this menu appear on my monitor screen upon completion of bootup, I created an AUTOEXEC.BAT (STARTUPBAT for SpartaDOS 3.2) file that ends with the following two command lines:

```
CLS (SpartaDOS 3.2 users see note at end)
TYPE MENUTXT
```

The AUTOEXEC.BAT file loads all my special drivers, sets some of my computer parameters, clears the screen, then prints the menu, waiting for my choice of activities. Each selectable activity has a batch file to configure the computer and execute.COM files. For instance, a selection of DATA BASE PROGRAM, by entering "-B<CR>" activates the batch file B:BAT:

```
CD B:>DATABASE
(CWD and D2: for SpartaDOS 3.2)
X DISKBASE
```

This batch file changes the default directory of B: drive, the drive where I keep my data files, to the DATABASE subdirectory, where I keep my database files. The batch file then executes my database program, DISKBASE.COM, from my current operating drive, the drive where I keep my executable program files. The program DISKBASE.COM is loaded into RAM, the program self starts, and I know that all my database files will be on B; without needing to use the subdirectory identifier. It's actually harder to describe than to do, but it works.

Similarly, a selection of "C. PRINT POWER," by entering "-C(CR)" activates the batch file C:BAT:

```
CD >PPOWER
X PRINTPWR
```

This batch file puts me in the PPOWER subdirectory on my default drive, then executes the PRINTPWR program. Simple and effective.

My computer now works for me, instead of vice versa. I no longer stare at the command prompt and wonder how to call up a specific application (What did I name that program?), and my disk drives and subdirectories are configured in one easy entry.

(Editor's Note: SpartaDOS 3.2 doesn't have a CLS command like SpartaDOS X. You can pad the menu textfile with carriage returns at the end to achieve the same effect as "CLS." Putting a Clear Screen character (Shift/Clear or \$7D or Decimal 125) in the menu textfile will clear the screen, but also displays a "Command Not Found" message immediately after the screen is cleared. P.S. For those who'd like to contact John on GENie, his id is J.SANDGREN. --RR)



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Using Atari 8-bits in the Educational Environment

by *Albert Baggetta*

Treasure Transfer

A few months ago, I received some great news. The school system where I teach was phasing out the old Atari 8-bit computers they once used for computer programming and word processing classes, in favor of spanking new PC's. The school is now having an MS-DOS love affair. Not so long ago they were "hot" for Atari, but as with any "old flame," when the "fire" burns down a fresh flame is found. The Ataris had to go.

Well, this was great news for me because I had been trying for years to get an Atari system for use in my English class room, just one, but no way—computers were for math, science and maybe business, but English—never (grrrrr)! Now I could pick and choose—so I took everything.

Needless to say, this struck some of my colleagues and administrators as rather odd. ("Why the heck is Baggetta stockpiling old computers in his English class room?") The spaces along the back of the room and the side walls began to look like a warehouse for dinosaur computers. There were 800's, 800XL's, 130XE's (Yup! the same kind you would have paid thousands for in the past); there were black/white monitors and color monitors; there were 810 drives and 1050 drives (even a Percom); there were lots of Microsoft BASIC carts, BASIC XL carts, some game carts and regular BASIC carts; there were miles of cables (all tangled of course); there were interfaces of all kinds and even a voice box, so that I could synthesize some of my programs. Yum, Yum!! ("Keep an eye on Baggetta—he might OD on computer chips.")

As you can see it was a great haul, and the best thing about it was that nobody wanted it but me. Now don't think I was greedy, I couldn't even give the stuff away to other people in the building because it was "out-dated" and nobody knew or wanted to know how to use it. Those familiar with Atari were too busy learning how to use the new PC's, so they didn't want anything that didn't have an 80-column screen and didn't use WINDOWS.

The equipment was in great shape. Several years of use meant that there were layers of dust and dirt on the components, but a little Windex and a can of air took care of that. Some of the items were worn or in need of repair, but the bulk was in excellent condition.

I had been programming my own 800XL at home for several years, so I was very familiar with the Atari systems I inherited. I wanted to get right to using these machines in my classroom, but I could see this was going to take time and preparation, so I sat down, made some plans and began the project of programming. Much of the time I spent setting up the computer programs was a work of love that I did in my spare time at home and during summer vacation.

To start, I set up a couple of the nicer 130XE units in my classroom, just so students could get familiar with these machines. After all, they were now being introduced to the PC's in their computer labs, so these machines would seem quite foreign to them. ("Hey, Mr. B, where's the mouse for this machine?") The new kids who hadn't used Atari's saw these machines as antiques that probably would not be of any use to them, until they started using them and were introduced to the hidden power of the Atari 8-bit.

In this article, and future ones if there is any interest expressed, I will relate to you some of my adventures and experiences using the Atari 8-bits in the educational environment. I don't plan to start a revolution and a rebirth of the 8-bit, although I wouldn't object to it, but perhaps my ramblings will inspire another educator to dust off an old Atari stored in some boiler room and give new life to the machine and his students. Let me start by telling you my experience of programming the Atari for class elections.

Class Elections the 8-Bit Way

One of my first major projects with my new-found machines was revamping our high school class elections—no simple task I soon found out.

A few years ago our school was offered the opportunity of using the town voting machines to run our class elections. These are huge cumbersome machines that form a booth in which the electorate pull little levers over their choices to make a selection. When they are through voting, the voters pull a huge red lever to register the votes on a massive roll of paper, hidden in the bowels of the machine. At the end of the day, an official opens the machine and the totals are added to the other machines used in the election, and the winners are announced.

This was all very new and very interesting, but it was also cumbersome and antiquated, since

everything was mechanical. I suggested to the director at the time that perhaps computers could be used to take care of all the calculations and make the process more state-of-the-art. He agreed and said that some American communities are already using computers for elections, but cost was prohibitive for us. This, of course, was several years ago.

Opportunity Knocks

Since then our economy has fallen upon hard times (and so have the town and school budgets), so using the town machines became impossible because of the cost of setup and operation. As advisor to our student council, I had to break the news to our members that they would have to go back to the paper ballot. Counting ballots, of course was no picnic, and at times not very reliable, since we had so many "hands in the soup" and hundreds of ballots to count. I hate to think of the number of times we had to recount.

Well, here it was, my chance to make the computer ballot a reality for our high school. Little did I know what I was doing. At the time, it seemed simple enough. Write a BASIC program that contained all of the names of the candidates and the offices they were running for. Have students choose the names from a menu for their selection and record the information for later use.

Of course, there were problems with this. As I worked on the program, I became uneasy with its "look and feel." The screen was too small, the font was too big, the colors were not right, the screen format was not quite what it should be, the students were screwing up the choices (can't let them have access to the keyboard), how can I save the data and make use of it later, etc...etc...etc....

Whew!!! This was turning into a real project. Fortunately, I had the summer and most of the next school year to write and test the program, over and over again.

I decided on a multi-level program, a program that was actually made up of two programs that did different things. Information about candidates would have to be hard coded into the program. I also decided that the students would not have access to the keyboard, all input would be through the joystick. As it turned out this proved more interesting for the students since they were already geared toward the video controller concept.

Finally, I finished all of the programs and tested them to my satisfaction. It is not really a complicated plan, but it was time consuming because I started it from scratch. All related programs were done entirely in BASIC and the whole system is available to any educator who would like to adapt it to their school elections. More about that later.

Packaging Is Everything

With the programming done, I needed some way to give this election some class. We had to have a voting machine, some kind of booth that would allow each student privacy and access to the ballot. During summer vacation, I designed a gawd-awful booth with shelves, curtains, and levers—similar to those used in 19th century elections. I soon realized it was too bulky, not to mention ugly.

("Hey, this is ridiculous, why should I have to do all the work!") This was a school project, so why not let the kids do some of the work. When I returned to school the next term, I immediately went to see the shop teacher, to see if I could recruit his advanced wood class to build some cabinets for the machinery, along the lines of a video game. No problem, except one—money.

I went up to check with my principal to see if there was any money budgeted for the new year. Fortunately, he came up with enough to cover the cost of the wood and extras needed for six cabinets to house our new computerized voting machines, about \$150.00. Not bad. I alerted the industrial arts teacher who had his team draw up a plan and they set to work.

I also got to thinking it might be nice to have covers for the machines too, to keep them clean and safe from wandering hands during storage. So I checked with the sewing teacher about making nice denim covers for the machines. She assured me there would be no problem for her students to make covers, except one—money. Back to the principal, who again came up with the cash for the materials. They set about making the covers.

Another thought came to mind. I had all of this equipment, but I was going to need some extra items like power boxes, joysticks and extension cords to make everything work. I checked with our AVA director and he didn't see any problem with locating the needed equipment, except for one—money. (It always comes down to that, doesn't it?) For the third time, I asked for money, and I think I made it in just under the wire. I got what I needed, but the "cupboard" was now empty. Teachers, remember that it sometimes pays to ask, even when things seem hopeless.

After a couple of months a better prototype cabinet was sent to my room. (While it was not exactly the hand-carved mahogany piece of art I envisioned, it was certainly better than the monstrosity I had devised.) It already had a color monitor installed. I hooked up a 130XE, a 1050 drive and a joystick to the cabinet; fortunately, all the holes had been drilled in the right places. All of the machinery was placed in the belly of the cabinet, out of the reach of the students. The voter was to stand in front of the machine with joystick and screen available for use.

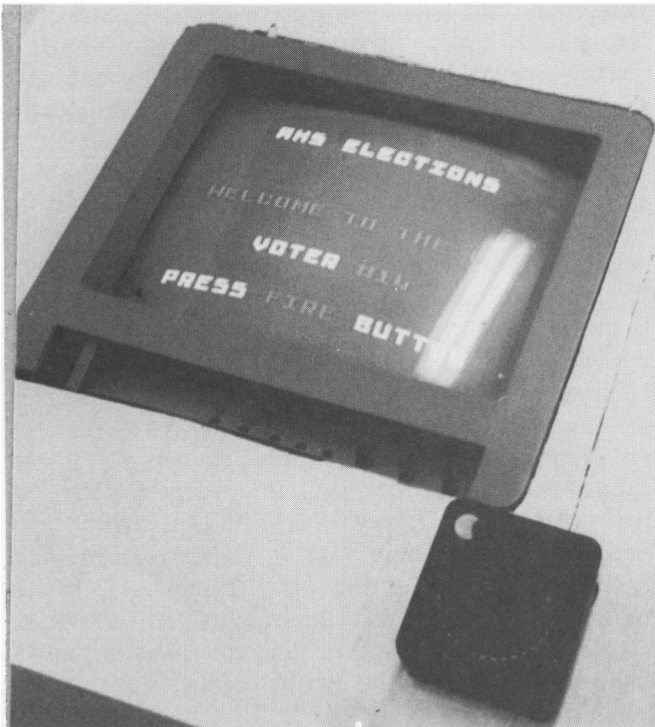
Field Testing

With everything assembled, I booted the main program and tried a test ballot I had made. Everything seemed to be working properly. I was able to select my candidate choices using the stick and the fire button to make my selections. When I was through selecting, all of my information was saved to disk. All systems were go, as they say at NASA, but I had to test this many times before we actually used the system.

I recruited my classes to vote on the machine to test the programming. The reactions were interesting. Some were afraid of the machine ("But what if I break it?"); some looked at it as a challenge ("Let's see if we can crash the program."); some were puzzled ("What do I do?"); and some were rather proud that they were participating in a program that might change the school elections ("Cool!").

By testing in this manner, we found what the students liked ("Hey, this is just like a video game!"), and what they didn't like or understand about the system ("Where's the fire button?—Imagine a teenager in this day and age not knowing what a fire button is!"). We also found that the angle of the monitors would have to be changed for privacy and height of the user. Some of the monitors and drives had become very weak, so we had to check for replacements. We learned a lot through these tests.

After going through about 200 students running the prototype and making necessary notations about necessary changes, we gave the go ahead to the industrial arts department to prepare all of our machines. This took several months; but, fortunately, our major election wasn't until the end of the school year.



Little by little all of the machines were completed and stored neatly in the rear of my room, replacing a lot of the storage cartons the equipment came in.

We needed one final test, however, before the final elections, and this came in the form of a State Board of Education election for students. We set up several of our Atari voting machines in the gym and promoted the election as a test.

This worked out fine because of my excellent students who supervised this important election. They were quick to notice any problems that came up (blown monitor, dead drive, faulty computer, etc.) and were fast to help me repair and replace equipment. Everything turned out great and the tallies were produced at the end of the school day, much to the amazement of student body and candidates. There wasn't even one complaint or suggestion that things were "fixed." And no recounts were necessary.

Because of this test, which handled about 400 students, we found out which of our equipment was reliable, which needed repairs, and which had to be discarded. I think it is something of a tribute to Atari that equipment that has gone through years of extensive use could still hold up under pressure.

Our Student Council title is the Office of Student Affairs, so I thought it might be a good idea if we gave our voting system an acronym. We decided upon O.S.A.C.A. (pronounced OH SAHKA'—sounds Japanese—stands for Office of Student Affairs Computer Analysis). This acronym would go on to be a part of our banner to promote class elections in all future elections.

Showtime!

Finally, with all our tests completed, we approached the big and ultimate test, student class elections. Three classes needed to be handled, Senior, Junior and Sophomore—total about 800 students. We knew this would be a strain on the equipment, but we had extra pieces for replacements, we had confidence, and we had to know if we could do it.

Our group started a promotion before election day, posting OSACA signs around the building, collecting nomination papers, and making announcements for the elections. Schedules for voting were sent out to the teachers, letting them know when they could bring in their class to vote.

I set about making an animated video with my Atari ST and *Cyber Paint*. This promoted OSACA and reflected the image of elections in the space age. Sound effects, visuals and space music were added. This was exhibited between classes and during the election to heighten the enthusiasm.

My next problem was where to put the machines. Fortunately, the 800's, drives and monitors fit nicely into their compact cabinets, so we didn't need too much room to run the election. We finally decided on

the school library. The librarian was glad to help us and let us use her facilities.

The night before the elections I got all of my recruits together. We proudly wheeled the machines to the library, and then the kids took over. They established a registration post for students to prepare for voting, they plotted a route for the voters to follow (cutting down congestion), they set up Disneyland-type rope channels for the students to follow to the machines and then to the exit. They even established guard and worker positions. Everything was tested thoroughly before the big day.

I called the local newspapers who did great stories on our project. They sent over a reporter who interviewed the students and me, and they even took pictures of the big event. I guess we stirred up enough interest because our superintendent even came down to give the machines a whirl.

Since education is an on-going thing, I thought it might be interesting to get some of the elderly in our town to become a part of our election. I called the Senior Center and they said that they had a few people who would love to come up and give us a hand running the election. They did a great job and loved it, and the kids loved having them there, too. People, unfortunately, like computers, are sometimes put out to pasture much before their usefulness has expired.

We had to hold the election over two days because we only had six machines available. On the first day three machines were dedicated to the Seniors and three to the Juniors. The second day all six machines were used for the Sophomore elections. The first morning we were all on edge. I had a sleepless night before election day. All I could picture was a major breakdown, which would cause a lockup and ruin our whole election. (Oh, I was confident all would go well, but I had prepared paper ballots, just in case.)

Seems like there is always a little gremlin waiting for a big event like this—an invisible, hideous creature that loves to tinker. No sooner did the first batch of students go in to vote than one of my workers called over that the screen on one of the machines went crazy and then dead. Someone had kicked the cord, whew! Easy fix.

A call came from the Junior side. Another monitor went crazy—lots of garbage on screen (nice kids, but not very discreet with their public announcements). I reset the machine, and it was fine for a while, but the 800 controlling the booth needed to be changed because of a malfunction. Needless to say, I was getting nervous.

But just as quickly the problem went away—the gremlin must have got bored. The rest of the day went smoothly. The next day went even better. Everyone who was working on the elections handled themselves very

efficiently; just about all of the students liked the new process for elections—including the candidates—and the teachers found the whole process interesting. Results were tallied at the end of the day and announced the next morning.

Summary

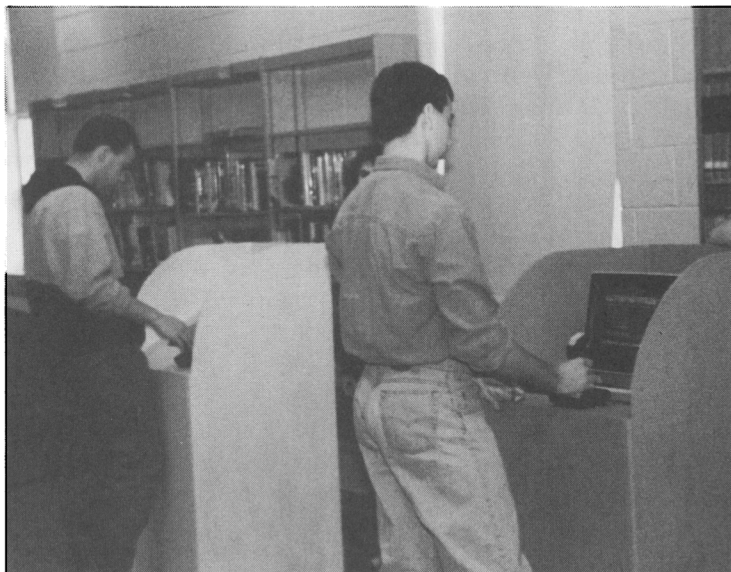
Well, there you have it. In all, the project was an eye opener for me. It was a lot of work and took a lot of my free time (some of it compensated as an in-service project), but it was a lot of fun, too. And now we have something useful from something that might have been cast aside. We have an election program that is modern and efficient. If funds become available, perhaps we can add to the system (we could use a few more units to handle the crowds in less time).

While OSACA is mainly a set of programs aimed at class elections, it can be used for other events as well. I have used a single machine in class to give quizzes, allowing the students choices for their answers. I have modified it to run polls about celebrities, political figures, works of literature, etc. There are a multitude of uses limited only by the imagination of the teacher.

As I mentioned above, the program is available to any educator who would like to “play” with it. Some BASIC knowledge is required to modify the initial programs, since questions have to be hard coded into the program. This is not as difficult as it sounds, since most of the hard coding takes the form of DATA statements.

If you are interested in obtaining a copy of the program, send a 5” disk and \$1.00 for postage to the following address, and I will get a copy of it off to you right away.

Albert Baggetta, P.O. Box 759, Agawam, MA 01001-0759. E-mail addresses: GENIE: BAGET and DELPHI: ALBERT.



STraightFAX! Update

Getting The Fax Straight Into Your Computer

Review by Frank Sommers

How Long? Oh, How Long?

How long does it take to receive a one page fax? Normally, a minute or two. How long did it take me with the new STFax update that permits you to send and, baby, to receive, to receive a fax right on your ST?

Almost 30 days. (As you will learn, not due to any fault in the program itself.) Yup, from the time I got my new STFax update and sat right down to receive one, it was just under a month before it actually happened. After several immediate failures, by that I mean, "No reception, no how," I faced the hated task of reading the documentation. Quickly, I learned that my 2400 Supra modem was not equipped to receive a fax by computer. A check with Joppa, the distributor of Charles Smeton's *STraightFAX!*, send and receive program, told me that for anywhere from \$160 to \$350 I could get a Supra Fax modem, running at speeds of from 9600 baud up to 14,500. Two weeks later I had a modem from Supra, the 14,500 version and pow! Now, I was going to receive, but fast.

Setting Your Controls

Wrong, electronic breath! I was still days away. Why? I had set my modem controls on the software to "Class 2," set them after finally talking to Joppa again about the need to do so. You might smile and ask, "Was I beginning to feel electrically ill-equipped to do something as advanced as receiving a fax on an ST?"

You bet your Republican campaign buttons, I was.

Bringing in the Experts

Finally, at a CN luncheon for local authors to re-view the latest issue, I brought in an expert, author extraordinaire David Troy. He sat down confidently, dialed his partner Mark at Toadd and told him to send away. Result? A send tone from Toad, but no answer tone from our end. Troy finally gave up, and suggested that I check with the distributor; possibly I had a bad program or a defective RS232 connecting cable. The documentation said the right cable was important. Several more days passed. A new cable arrived and with a smile I sat down fully expecting ... I don't know what.

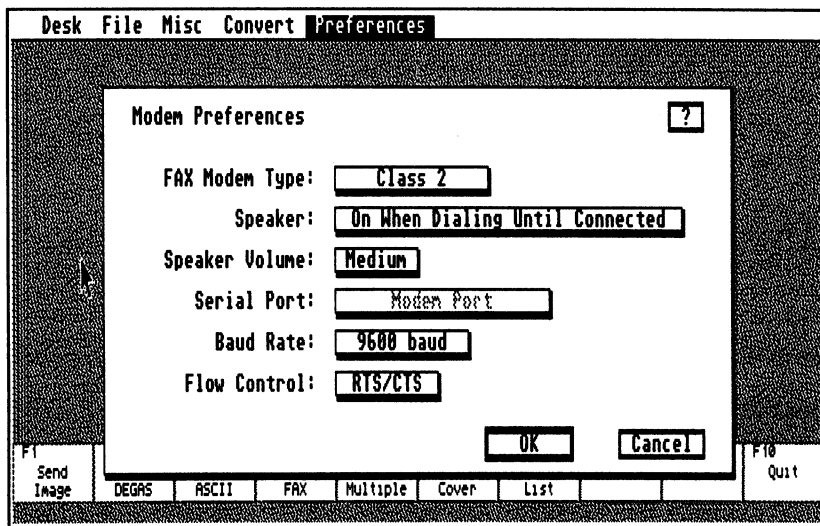
The Ultimate Moment

Then on the 26th day, I checked all my default settings one more time. The modem was set at "Class 2" and the Flow Control was "X/On" (for X modem on). Xmodem? I hit the button and the setting reverted to "RTS/CTS." Nobody had said that was what was required. Neither Joppa, nor Toad, nor the hated documentation. But being an adventurer, I asked my loyal publisher, Dr. Waters, to try one last time. On came the send tone. And seconds later I heard the beloved sound, the beep--beep--beep of the receive tone. One minute later the job was done and I had received the latest Joe Water's editorial. I immediately called Cape Town, South Africa to test the fax over a slightly longer distance. My loyal British friend, and once great operatic tenor, Murray Dickie, boomed back a schedule for a Safari in Botswana we were planning for November. That proved it, proved the value of having a fax attached to your ST.

What Does It Really Do for You?

But let's look at the real utility and cost versus an independant fax machine. It is handy not to have an additional machine cluttering up your desk or your telephone table area. And the other major advantage allows you to send the same fax to multiple addressees by pushing a button and then walking away. With a fax machine, you have to do it one after the other. So, if you regularly send, say, a real estate ad or some other pitch for a business or other activity you're engaged in, then *STraightFAX!* for your ST is quite possibly for you.

But, for the normal fax user, who receives from various sources and sends regularly, but to single addressees, the facts may add up differently. A discount fax machine of high calibre can be had for about \$395, sometimes a bit less. The least expensive SupraFAX-Modem retails for about \$160; that's a 2400 baud modem. Most fax machines send and receive at 9600 baud, which would cost you an additional \$100. The



STraight FAX! program sold at an introductory price of \$70. Thus, for somewhere between \$230 and \$330 you can have your computer fax ready. But ready means when someone wants to send you a fax, they have to call, tell you to turn on your machine and bring up the fax program (unless you are content to leave it on all the time with *STraightFAX!* loaded when you are not using the machine for other tasks). The trouble with that is all incoming calls receive a fax answer tone, unless you have a separate line. That adds another \$20-odd a month to your overhead, but a straight fax machine also requires a separate line, or a switching box, which is often unreliable.

How does it sum? As noted if the requirement is for regular multiple-addressee fax transmissions, *STraightFAX!* has a definite edge over a stand alone machine. Otherwise, space, number of connects to your phones, e.g. computer modem, answering machine, fax machine, etc., may be the deciding factor. For ourselves, we find the *SupraFAXModem* and *Smeton's* software the answer, even though we don't send multiple-addressee faxes. And despite our slow-learner problems, the documentation from both *Supra* and *Joppa* are quite a bit above the average.

Hello, Capetown? We have a fax for you!

[*STraight FAX!*, \$69.95, *Joppa Computer Poroducts*, 800-876-6040, FAX: 717-428-0424. *Supra FAXModem V.32bis*, \$315, *Supra Corporation*, 7101 *Supra Dr. SW.*, Albany, OR 97321-9944; 503-967-2410.]

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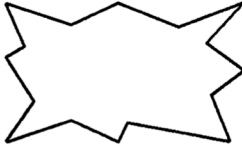
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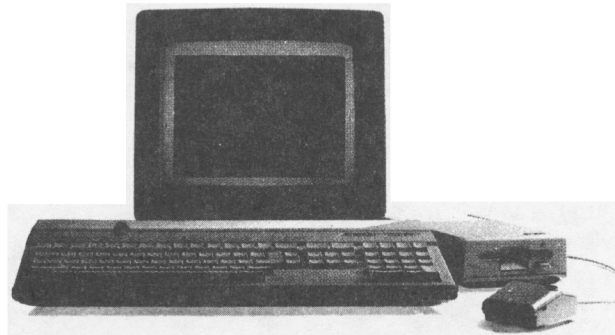
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The 154 sonnets by William Shakespeare were first published as a collection in 1609, although they were probably written around 15 years earlier. Those 400-year-old poems have become, especially over the past 200 years, objects of a great amount of study, discussion, and disagreement.

The sonnets were the only work the author wrote in the first person, the only work where we see through the "I" of William Shakespeare.

Sonnets are 14-line poems following specific rhyme schemes. The form originated in Italy in the mid 1500's. As with much poetry, there can be a certain amount of mystery in sonnets.


Numerous texts have studied Shakespeare's sonnets as scholars have attempted to explain the poems. But scholars disagree and we still find many questions left unanswered.

Questions. For example: ...are the sonnets autobiographical? ...were the first 126 addressed to a single man? ...and, if so, who was that man? ...after reading #127-152, did the poet have only one mistress? ...the published order of the 154 poems may seem arbitrary; therefore, what is the correct order of the sonnets? ...are there links between the sonnets and Shakespeare's other works? ...when were the sonnets actually written and what specific events do they re-

**Take a look at the
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Review by Bill Mocs

William Shakespeare



1564 - 1616

The Sonnets

fer to? ...were any sonnets addressed to England's Queen Elizabeth I? ...questions....

A recent software program for the Atari ST, *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, offers us the chance to take a look at those sonnets and do a little detective work on our own.

Sonnets. With Shakespeare's Sonnets, it's possible to read all 154 poems in sequence or to take a look at just a selected range, such as numbers 48 through 54. (Shakespeare's sonnets were never titled, just numbered.) There is strong evidence that not all of the sonnets may be numbered in the correct order; it's possible to play out your own script by keying in individual sonnet numbers you'd like to take a look at in any order.

The language used in the sonnets is 400 years old and some words may not be understood today. The program includes an on-line glossary to help, offering very brief definitions to 356 words. It's a

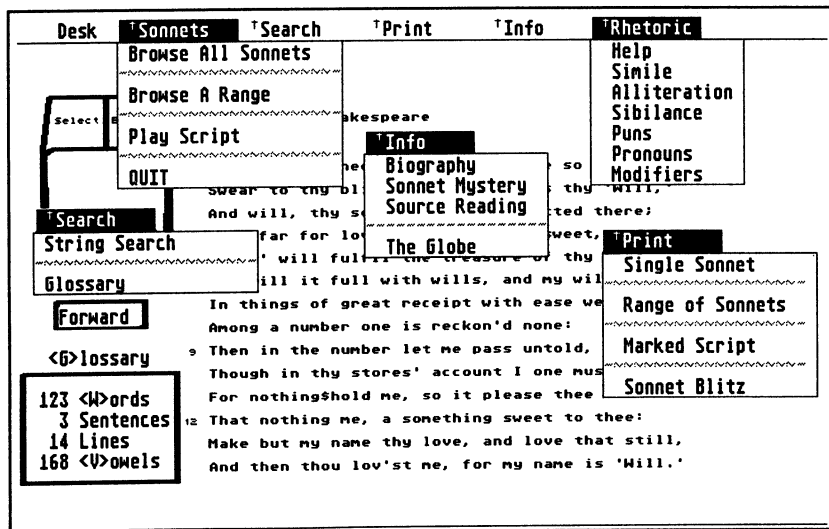
case-sensitive glossary, so capital letters, spaces, apostrophes, and hyphens are important.

Search. One of the most important features of the program is its string search. If you're looking for sonnets which contain a specific word or very brief phrase (12 characters), key it in. Remember, it's case sensitive ("Love" will not be the same as "love."). It's possible to search all sonnets, or just a range of sonnets, for this string. The glossary is available during the search. Printed copies of sonnets with the string in bold type are possible.

When the search is completed, it's possible to see a list on the screen of sonnet numbers and the lines containing the string. This list may be printed.

Print. Sonnets may be individually printed or a range of sonnets may be printed. Also, a sonnet "script" marked earlier may be printed. (Remember, a script is selected sonnets, not necessarily in numerical order.)

A sonnet "blitz" is available to help analyze a selected sonnet. This blitz will show: the poem's first line; the number of lines, words, contractions, and possessives; the number of negative words, characters, and comparisons; the average word length and number of modifying phrases; the number of declarative sentences, questions, and exclamations; and the number of feminine, masculine, and archaic pronouns. Also, the number of words for different character lengths will be shown. This may all be printed.



Other. The program includes very brief text screens including information on Shakespeare's life, mysteries of the sonnets, and a source reading recommendation. A drawing showing the possible location of the Globe theater is available. And, if you've forgotten since your grade school days, brief definitions of some rhetorical devices are included (alliteration, puns, etc.).

Final Notes. *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (\$11 ppd.) is an interesting and inexpensive software program. It offers the chance to study these important poems using several analytical devices. The string search is probably the most useful feature for which a computer would really be necessary. I would have preferred, however, that the string search not be case-sensitive. The on-disk documentation (3750 words) explains the program. The disk is not copy-protected.

Albert Baggetta, the program's author, should be well-known to Atari fans. He has had articles and programs published in many Atari magazines. Currently, programs available from Baggetta include a database for comic book collectors (\$11 ppd.) and several other inexpensive disks. He is also the author of *The Elie-mouse Coloring Book* (CN: Dec. '91), a coloring program for very young Atari users.

[Albert Baggetta, P.O. Box 759, Agawam, MA 01001-0759].

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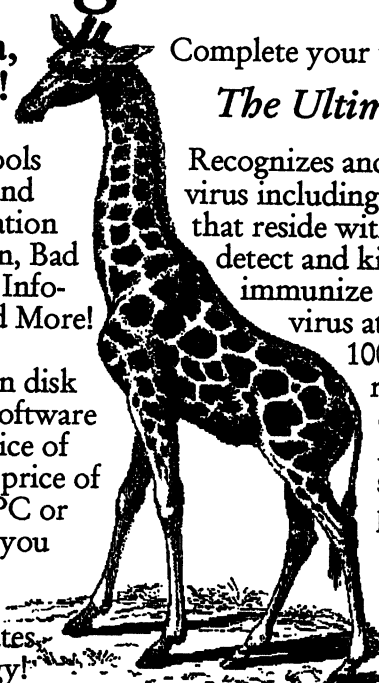


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Legend

Review by Alfred C. Giovetti

English Import

Legend is a product of Mindscape International in England, one of a series of games that have first made their mark as an Atari ST and Amiga bestseller in Europe. Later it was brought to the U.S. in the Amiga format and eventually converted to the IBM format.

Legend is a hybrid of a role-playing adventure and a strategy game. The role-playing aspects of the game are represented by a group of four adventurers: a berserker, a troubadour, an assassin, and the runemaster, who must single-handedly defeat hordes of monsters on battlefields, and within the evil dungeons and towers. The strategy game involves the armies which move across the wilderness constantly, fighting over the control of the towns and castles of the land.

Character Classes

The four characters and their obligatory four professions have unique aspects in both character generation, combat, and character advancement. Each of the four characters has a special combat power. The berserker has his insane fury. The assassin can hide in the shadows. The troubadour can sing, and the runemaster has rune magic.

Bardic Magic

The troubadour's bardic magic consists of eight different songs. Seven of the songs can temporarily increase seven different attributes during combat. The eighth song can permanently heal lost hit points. Bardic magic increases in effectiveness with the magical power of the instrument played and the level of the troubadour playing the instrument.

Rune Magic

The rune magic of *Legend* is unusual in that the runes and reagents can be combined in a mixing bowl to construct an almost infinite number of unique spells. The ability to construct unique spells is requisite to solving special puzzles, and to succeeding against nearly invincible opponents in special magic-dependent combat situations.

Cantrip Construction

Spell components and runes are of the effector and director type. The director tells the effector how and where to act: that is, either in front of the caster or the eight spaces surrounding the caster, or fly to a location specified by the caster, or continuously activate

every four seconds at the specified location(s). The effector runes tell the spell what to do at the location and time specified by the director. The effectors can be either healing or damaging. There are four directors and twelve effectors. Spells can have multiple effectors and directors, making for very specific and complex spells. Up to ten spells can be held in memory until they are erased or replaced with other spells. The magic system and its use to solve puzzles is the most unique use of magic seen in any role-playing game yet produced. The unique system leads to many unusual puzzles, and interesting uses of magic in combat.

Top-down Perspective

The interface is composed of the wilderness, the interior exploration and combat, the town menu, the character attributes, character inventory, and the shop screens. The wilderness screen is an overhead display that fills the monitor with the main castle, town, and the ancient in the center. Dotted the landscape are towns, castles, keeps, dungeons, towers, the ancient, moonhenge, and the unshrine. Travel is effected by a mouse point-and-click on a destination. The group travels automatically to the location. The speed can be increased by buying better horses at the keeps. Also seen on the wilderness map are the banner armies moving across the land, defending and attacking the cities of the land. If you encounter an evil banner army, your party can attempt to hide from them, or they will be forced to fight.

Interface Icons

The interior exploration and combat screen is an overhead oblique view of the dungeon interiors or of the wilderness combat area in a banner army battle with your group. Around the diamond-shaped playing field are scattered a number of stone-like platforms called plinths. Clicking on a plinth will result in the action represented by the three dimensional icon that is resting on the plinth. Clicking on the chicken, for example, will make your party run away from combat or run to the nearest exit from the dungeon. Clicking on the character plinths will allow access to the character special powers, inventory, and attributes. For example, spells can be cast from the activation of the runemaster icon and the mixing bowl, if held in one of the character's active hands.

Same Old Plot

The object of *Legend* is to traverse all the dungeons and towers of evil, defeat them all, and thereby free the land from evil (until the next evil wizard, monster, god, or other denizen arrives in the sequel). Overall, the deficiencies of the game include its rigidly linear plot, which does not allow any variation in the sequence in which you solve the puzzles or progress through the dungeons. Another deficiency of

the game is the lack of clues to help direct the game player to the next step or solution. The dungeons, taverns, unshrine, and moonhenge provide some hints, but they are few and obscure. Also two save games is not enough for this or any other game.

Adequate Utilities

Most of the normal game controls are present, with restart, load, save, and pause. There are no off-disk paragraphs. Note taking is all via paper and pencil. There is no copy protection. The sound includes a musical score that can be turned off or on, with no volume control, as many of the better games have. There is no voice, but the sound effects are good. The video shows a good use of color, but the graphics look more like 8-bit in some areas than 16-bit graphics. Elliot the dragon's automapping system is quite good and it provides detailed information. The combat is real-time and the display is overhead-oblique.

Many people who have become spoiled by the first-person perspective of *Dungeon Master* and *Bloodwich* may not enjoy the over-head perspective, while others who like overhead-perspective may not enjoy real-time combat. *Legend* is a unique game with many fine attributes to recommend it, not the least of which is the unusualness of the game.

Legend is available from Mindscape International; Overseas Telephone: 011 44 444 246 333. Retail Price: \$49.95.

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The Quintopus *Review by Charles Cole*

*...Reaching Out to Your
8-bit Peripherals...*

Talk about strange names for a computer device! I think this one deserves a prize for the most unusual. Every schoolboy knows that an Octopus got that name because it has eight arms, so a Quintopus must be an Octopus that has lost three arms, right? Well, not quite. This Quintopus is an ingenious device for interfacing dead-end Atari 8-bit peripherals that cannot be daisy-chained, such as the Atari SX212 modem, a printer, etc., or ones that malfunction because they are at the end of a long daisy chain of other devices.

Purchasing a Quintopus with switchable ports was the first contact I ever had with Computer Software Services, located in Rochester, New York. When I purchased mine, it was one of the featured items in their advertisements that were, at that time, being carried in good-ol' *Analog* and *Antic* magazine. They still advertise in *Atari Interface Magazine* (AIM), but the Quinto-

pus no longer appears in the advertisements, though it is still available.

There are two versions of a Quintopus: with or without switchable ports. It is basically a circuit board with one Atari serial input jack connected through buffer microchips to five output serial jacks, and drawing its power through the daisy chain cable. Your Atari computer's serial cable is plugged into the Quintopus' input; 5 peripherals can be connected to the outputs.

The board has no cabinet, but does have rubber feet on the bottom so it will not scratch whatever you set it onto, and the circuit traces will not short out if you put it on top of a metal cabinet. It's almost as ugly as a real live octopus, but its functionality makes up for that. Before I obtained this simple device, I was continually having to connect and disconnect devices as needed. The switchable ports version actually

switches only 2 of the 5 outputs, but that's plenty for my system.

I can now run an 800, a 130XE, three 810 disk drives, an XF551 disk drive, a 3-1/2 inch disk drive, an SX212 modem, an Epson printer, an Atari 1020 plotter, and an Atari 1010 Program Recorder through the Atari serial port without having to juggle wires all the time. A simple flip of a toggle switch on the Quintopus changes between the 130XE and 800, and the other toggle switch lets me select between the XF551 or my Archiver/Happy modified Atari 810 drive as Drive #1.

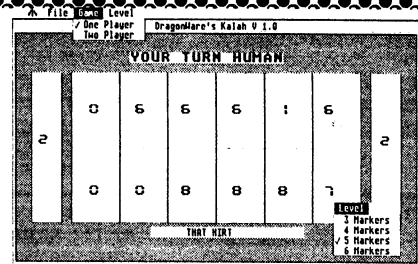
If you are looking for a solution to the "dead end" peripheral dilemma, or want to use 2 computers with the same set of peripherals, Quintopus offers a perfect solution.

The switchable Quintopus Deluxe and non-switchable Quintopus are available for \$59.95 and \$39.95, respectively from: Computer Software Services, P.O. Box 17660, Rochester, NY 14617. Order: (716) 429-5639; FAX: (716) 247-7158. BBS: (716) 247-7157.

Kalah ST

*A game of skill and thought for one or two
players ... mouse-driven*

Review by Bill Mocs



Kalah ST is a game of classic strategy for the ST. It's a "pit-and-pebbles" game played by picking up stones (pebbles) from one of your pits and distributing (sowing) them in other pits (holes) in a determined direction.

Points are scored by placing a pebble in a pit at your end of the board or by capturing pebbles of the other player. It is a game of very simple and easily-understood rules and one which encourages plan-ahead strategy for success.

According to notes in *Games* magazine (Nov. 1984 and Nov. 1986), there are about 200 of these mancala (pit-and-pebble) games. Each has slightly different rules and strategy. They've been played for centuries, from the East Indies to Africa. Individual versions of mancala, which are often marketed as board games, include Adi, Dakan, and Wari.

Kalah ST is just one version of mancala. Turns alternate. Select the stones in one of the pits on your side of the board and distribute them counter-clockwise, one to each pit following the pit selected. You'll earn a point by dropping a stone in the pit at your end of the board or by capturing the stones in the opponent's pit. This capture occurs when your final stone is dropped in one of your empty pits and there are stones in the opponent's pit directly opposite.

An extra turn is earned by dropping your last stone in your pit at the end of the board. There is no limit to the number of extra turns a player may earn. Games end when one player empties his side of the board, thereby also capturing any pebbles on his opponent's side.

Like many strategy games, *Kalah ST* is relatively easy to play, if not to describe or win. Games play quickly and are usually completed within two to five minutes.

Kalah ST runs in medium or high resolution. There is little in the way of "bells and whistles." Graphics are stark. In *Kalah ST*, numbers are shown instead of showing pebbles in each pit. It would have been visually enjoyable to have the game run in low resolution and to see some artistic detailing done on the game board and the pebbles. (Remember how visually entrancing *Shanghai* was when it was released for the ST a few years ago?)

The documentation is disk-based (1472 words). The mouse-driven game may be played against the computer or against a second human player.

The computer opponent is not especially difficult. I beat it the second game I played, although I had never played this

type of game before. It was fun to win some of those early games, but it would add to the long-term enjoyment of the game to have a computer opponent with higher levels of ability. Once you understand the game, it's possible to beat the computer player on a consistent basis. The computer seems to have a standard set of instructions to follow as it takes its turn, so it's possible to set up your moves having a good idea what the computer will then do. This seemed especially true in the game's opening moves.

Four levels of game play are set by the number of pebbles placed in each pit at the beginning of the game (3, 4, 5, or 6). The computer player makes its moves quickly, so it's not really possible to see what's going on when the computer opponent takes over. I would have preferred an option to pause after each computer move when it has more than one move in its turn.

At the bottom of the computer screen, brief "witty" sayings are flashed during the game. They seemed somewhat sophomoric and included misspellings. There were other misspellings, too, both within the game and in the documentation. A little proofreading would have been nice.

Kalah ST (v. 1.0), written by Christopher W. Roberts, is distributed on a double-sided disk, not copy-protected. The game could fit on a single-sided disk, but includes a free program, *STress Test*. This is a series of questions designed to determine the level of stress in your life.

There are weaknesses in *Kalah ST*, but it has its points. It was fun to be able to beat the computer opponent early in the learning curve, although I would still like to see stronger computer opponents available. In a two-player game, of course, this would not be of concern. This type of strategy game is really ideal for computer play; it obviously beats picking up and dropping a lot of little pebbles and then taking more time to count, making sure everything is done properly or determining a winner.

In addition to *Kalah ST* (\$19.95), the publisher has other software titles available for the ST. They include *G-Man* (\$24.95), a collection of GDOS utilities; *The Box* (\$74.95), a MIDI thru adaptor; and *The Satellite Locator* (\$19.95), used to locate any geosynchronous satellite for anywhere on the globe. Soon available will be *PAF 2.2.1* (\$40.95), genealogical software for the ST.

[DragonWare Software, P. O. Box 1719, Havre, MT 59501-1719.]

Current Notes ST Library

Current Notes disks are \$4.00 each, (10+ disks are \$3.50 each). Add \$1 for shipping and handling for every 6 disks. Order disks from CN Library, 122 N. Johnson Rd, Sterling VA 20164. MasterCard and VISA orders accepted. Call (703) 450-4761. Unless otherwise indicated, disks are double-sided.

June 1992

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- #691: Games (Flipped!, Poker Dice, Roulette, Computer Yahtzee)(C)
- #692: Equalizer (STe moving pixels demo) (C)
- #693: Digitized Sounds
- #694: Quartet Player
- #695: Demos (Convector Professional, Stock the Market)
- #696: Utilities (by Stuart Coates)
- #697: Games (Euchre, 5 of a Kind, Invasion of Mutant Caterpillars, Bang!) (C)
- #698: Calamus Fonts #7
- #699: Business Clip Art

July/August 1992

- #700: SpiritWare's Bible Concordance, Part 1 (SS)
- #701: SpiritWare's Bible Concordance, Part 2
- #702: Calligrapher Demo
- #703: Elimouse Complimentary Coloring Book(C)
- #704: ST Writer Elite V4.8
- #705: Winners in the Calamus Creativity and Design Contest
- #706: Utilities (DiskSave, Finder V12, JClabel V3, OnTime V2.2, Tool V1.9, Worm, FontKill)
- #707: Warp 9 Pictures and Fonts
- #708: Demos (Inventory Pro V6.1 and Payroll Expert)
- #709: Game Demos (Populous II, Conquer, Nightmare, Penguin)(C)
- #710: RPG Games (Quest, Pacific Island, Robin Hood)
- #711: Arcade Games (Hurry!, Marbleous, Cops'n'Robbers, Sno-fite)(C)
- #712: Triplink! FEDBBS
- #713: Transcendence BBS Demo, Part 1
- #714: Transcendence BBS Demo, Part 2
- #715: ST Keep BBS
- #716: Telecom (Assassin, Galactic Empire, Ghost Writer, Joute, Rufus)
- #717: Utilities (1st Spooler, BootType II, Bubble, ChangesZ, Company, CapsLock Status, Dots Screen Saver, EDM Shell 2.24, Find-All, Look ST V1.6, Multi-Depacker V1.0, Pool Fix, TimeCard V1.01)
- #718: Ideal-List Print Utility
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- #720: Monochrome Word Fun (Search Me, ABC Jumble, Jumble, ZeST Keno, Mumbo Jumbo)
- #721: Demos (Silhouette V1.37, G-Man V3.0, UK Virus Killer)
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- #725: Font GDOS, Part 2
- #726: Windowing Systems for MiNT (SS)
- #727: MiNT Utilities, Part 1
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September 1992

- #730: Otto's Resource Construction Set (SS)
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- #736: Games (Moonlord ST, Munchie V1.0, Drachen) (C)
- #737: Arena Earth game (C)
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October 1992

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- #750: Games (Ozone, Tuzzle, Spider, Tanx, TV Adv) (C)
- #751: Power DOS, GoGo ST V5.0, JumpStart V2.7, TeraDesk
- #752: Demos (STyle and Data Diet)

Populous II

Secrets [of the Gods] Revealed

by Micky Boyd

[In the June issue of *Current Notes*, we printed a review of *Populous II*. Our reviewer, Mike Heininger, reported some difficulties in getting the program to perform to his satisfaction. In July, Craig Kerns, a *Populous I* (and *II*) fan, expressed his disappointment in not seeing a more favorable account and some tips and hints. This month, we received a letter from Mickey Boyd that provided a wealth of hints and advice to help people get started. Mickey's letter was so long and detailed, that I decided to pass it on here, as a full-fledged article, rather than in the Letters to the Editor section. I trust it will help current, and prospective, *Populous II* players. -JW]

Pertaining to the review of *Populous II* in the June issue, I would like to point out a couple of things. First of all, both of the *Populous* games are excellent. They are very unique, very object oriented, and extremely difficult to explain in prose. A "hands on demo" is really the only way to quickly grasp the basics of the game, which creates a "chicken and egg" dilemma. I personally had *Populous* for about two months (I played it once and filed it in the "good graphics, no fun" category) before I really learned how to play it. I did this in response to the large amount of Internet traffic about the game, in both Atari and Amiga newsgroup areas (I wondered what I had missed). Thus, I understand the reviewer's annoyance with the instructions that come with the game, but would like to point out that a video cassette would be needed to do the job right.

How to Practice

The reviewer seemed somewhat frustrated that there was no novice mode in the game for instructional purposes. In fact, there are at least two trivial ways to gain practice with this game.

The first way is to use the "paint map" option (which allows one to create new worlds in *Populous II*). One of the editable fields in this mode is "mana" for both human and opponent ("mana" is equivalent to "power"). Merely give oneself a lot of it, and the game is drastically reduced in complexity. Also, in this mode one has the opportunity to try out all the various battle and building options the game has to offer.

The second way is a bit sneakier. Repeatedly pressing the F9 key during play of a regular game will increase one's mana to its highest level. This is a "cheat"

that was published in several of the European game magazines.

Another thing that might make experimenting with the game a bit more fun is the enclosed list of all 1,000 world names in *Populous II*. The original form of this list is a small GEM program and an unnumbered text file. It is a freeware program included on the issue 35 disk of *ST Format*. I also include my version of the data file, which is numbered and in multiple columns (suitable for printing). Please put these files in the CN library. (Done; I have added them to CN #709D. -JW).

Game Tips

Here are some game tips. They are applicable in either *Populous* or *Populous II*. Please note that I have already disclaimed any ability to explain the games clearly (grin). When beginning a game, be sure to read the world description screen. It will tell you what powers you (and the opponent) will have, and the characteristics of the world. This information will affect the strategy one uses to win.

When starting, immediately pause the game (pause icon in *Pop 1*, F10 in *Pop 2*). Go and look at the enemy territories, and if you locate the enemy leader, put the information "pointer" on him. This way, you can quickly switch to where the enemy action is (if the enemy leader does not expire). The "quick switching" icons that both games provide allow the player to quickly locate important places on the world map without a lot of hunting around with the mouse.

Building Population

There are two distinct phases of the game: building population, and conquering the enemy. At the beginning of the game, one should be concerned with building population (and occasionally harassing the enemy with disaster-type powers). One way to do this effectively is to deliberately limit the amount of flat land you provide for your people. In other words, create a large flat plain, then knock a few holes in it. Your people will be forced to build small houses, which produce more (weaker) people rapidly. Continue this formula until you have a lot of buildings, then go back and start filling in the holes. At this point, the smaller buildings will consolidate into cities, and even more people will be generated (due to the surplus of people in the buildings). Remember, the size of the building indicates the amount of time it takes to "fill it up" and produce wandering people (wanderers are what is needed to create more buildings, and hence more people). Restrict the size at first (by restricting flatlands) and you will get more buildings. Later, make the buildings big. During this "building phase" be sure to have the "go out and build" icon engaged.

Note the relationship between building sophistication and population production. The most sophisticated building will take the longest to “fill up” and produce its first wanderer. However, after it has produced the first one (and is therefore full), it will produce subsequent wanderers quicker than any of the other types of buildings. Think of each type of building as a city, with the sophistication relating to the size of the city. Also, think of each person as a group of people, the size of which is related to the level of sophistication of the building which produced it. Thus, the wanderers produced by a big city will be stronger than those produced by a small one.

Mana

Mana creation is a factor of population and the sophistication of that population. The more numerous and advanced your population, the faster and higher your mana will increase. As stated above, you first want numbers over sophistication. However, this can cause a problem with mana (you might have too little to be able to flatten land). In this case, you might want to follow the above strategy for a bit (to get a few separate houses), then flatten land around just one of them to turn it into a high level city. At that point, you should have all the mana you need for building and the occasional disaster for the enemy. Resume the above strategy at that point. Resist the urge to flatten everything in sight and produce a cluster of cities (they will be very empty, and take forever to produce wanderers).

During this building phase, keep an eye on your mana. When you have enough for a disaster (a storm, earthquake, flame column, etc.), go find a place in the enemy territory that is flat (and will probably have some high level cities on it), and perform the disaster. You will not have enough mana to do any real damage, but it will force the opponent to divert attention from his/her population building effort. It will also keep the sophistication of the enemy down (hopefully enough to prevent you from having to endure the same kind of treatment).

The Conquering Phase

OK, now for the conquering phase. First of all, note that the only person you have direct control over in the game is the leader of your people. You may have at most one leader at any time. You can tell the leader to go to the papal magnet (the religious symbol), and you can move the magnet anywhere in the world. When this happens, the people go to the leader (not the magnet). So, you have some control (influence might be a better word) over where your people go. You can use this during the building phase to put your people where you want them to build (and then switching to the “go out and build” mode). You can also use

this ability to attack the enemy. Simply put the papal magnet within enemy territory, and tell the leader to go to it. When he (and some of your people) get there, switch to the “fight and build” mode. Conquer some buildings, make an “outpost,” and move the magnet again. In this way, you can get all your wanderers to join in the fight.

During this attack phase, you can also destroy enemy buildings with the various disaster powers you have at your disposal. However, be careful of the ones that create a semi-permanent hazard (the swamps, for example). When your people get there, they can fall in also! To prevent this, follow your leader on the screen, and knock the hazards away by raising and lowering land on them (this is also a good way to knock down enemy buildings and “soften” the enemy up for your attack). Usually, you can only raise and lower land if you have a building on the screen. A quick switch to “go out and build” mode will accomplish this. As you advance your attack, continue to occasionally stop and create some buildings (or your newly acquired land will be retaken by the enemy).

Occasionally, you should go back to your territory and have a look around. You might find that the enemy is running rampant, or that he/she has performed disasters on your land. Fix these if you find them. Also, note that some of the disasters cause squares of land to be “spoiled” (they will have a different texture). Fix them by raising and lowering the square. One of these “spoiled” squares acts just like a hill or hole (it reduces the sophistication of the buildings near it).

In this second phase of the game, after your “army” is fighting the enemy, you can take more of an “armchair” approach. This is the most enjoyable part of the game, as you can sit and watch your people do their thing. Flit about the world, improving a building here, inflicting a disaster there, switching people modes, moving the magnet around, etc. It takes on almost a “managerial” approach, as opposed to the “I have to do everything” of the first phase. Sit back and watch your strategy unfold. Also, watching the little people running around doing their thing is quite entertaining (the individualized behavior of all the wanderers boggles the computer scientist in me—what incredible programming!).

Watch Your Leaders

Don’t be impressed with the various powers that allow you to turn your leader into a super juggernaut (in *Pop I* a knight, in *Pop II* various different Olympian gods). The new creature will have the same fighting strength as the leader you created it from, but you will have no control over it. These effects also take a lot of mana. A strong leader is better than a “super guy,” because you can direct him with the papal mag-

net. When it seems that you are winning the game, you can create a few just to watch them burn down all the buildings (they are entertaining).

The information pointer can be "attached" to a wanderer by clicking on him with the left button. If you already have someone you wish to keep track of (the enemy leader, for example) yet you wish to use the information pointer, a right click will temporarily attach it to an object. The pointer will go back to the original subject in a few seconds. In *Pop I*, the most common use for this was to find out how soon a building would produce a wanderer. In *Pop II*, the height of the building's flag indicates this without any special action.

If you find yourself with so many people that you cannot flatten land for them fast enough, use the "combine with other people" mode. The wanderers will approach each other, and will merge into stronger (but fewer) wanderers. In the build, fight, and combine modes, wanderers will build on flat land when they encounter it. In the "go to the leader" mode, they will not.

When in "leader go to the magnet, people go to the leader" mode, if the leader reaches the magnet he will stay there and begin to absorb the wanderers that come to him (they will all be headed his way). In *Pop I*, the leader paces back and forth. In *Pop 2*, a shimmering blue field appears into which the people walk. This makes the leader stronger. Doing this before the assault will be a big help, as trying to create new leaders while on the move is a pain. If the leader expires, the people will all go to the papal magnet. The first to touch it becomes the new leader (identified by the little papal magnet symbol floating nearby).

Watch Out for Floods

I usually do all my building at the lowest land level (right above the water). I lower any mountains down to this level. The exception to this is if the enemy has the "flood" power. It takes a lot of mana, but it will drop the entire map by one level. If all your buildings and people are at the lowest level, you must scramble around trying to save them from drowning (by raising land under them). Thus, if the enemy (or you, for that matter) has the flood option, build on a couple of levels above the water. Remember, read the world description screen before you start playing!

One last trick. At the beginning of the game, you wish to flatten land as quickly as possible. There is a fast way to do it, at the expense of some extra mana. Simply raise a point of land two clicks instead of one, then lower once. This will flatten four squares of land with two mouse clicks. Also, if you have problems raising/lowering the exact square you wanted, note that the dot that follows the mouse pointer is where the action actually occurs (not at the tip of the pointer itself). This can be confusing at first.

Two Are Better Than One

By all means, try the two player option in either *Populous!* It is best done with the two machines directly connected with a null-modem cable, but it is also quite acceptable at 2400 baud via modem. I have purchased additional ST, Amiga, and IBM PC versions of *Populous* and given them away as gifts to generate some competition (grin). All the versions will work with each other in two-player mode, so you can play a friend with an Amiga or PC (you cannot play *Pop 1* against *Pop 2*, though). Nothing warms the heart quite like performing several earthquakes in quick succession, followed by a quick message (via the personal message box) of "Nyaa Nyaa." The ability to communicate short sentences back and forth over the modem is a great touch.

Hmmm, I notice that my subscription letter has gotten rather large. Perhaps it could be a mini-article? You may reprint this as you see fit, as long as it is done in its entirety, and my name is associated with it. Also, I will include an ASCII version on the disk.

As usual, thanks for printing the best ST magazine around. This will be my fifth subscription year (and I have another two years of back issues that I bought, just for reference!).

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Calligrapher Professional

Perhaps the Premier Word Processor for the Atari

Review by John Godbey

Newest! Best?

Calligrapher is a new word processor for the Atari. It is being distributed in this country by CodeHead Technologies. In recent full page ads in *Current Notes* and other Atari magazines they call it, "The ultimate writing machine," and state that it represents "world-class word processing." Since a world class word processor is just what I have wanted ever since I bought my Atari, I bought a copy of *Calligrapher Professional* at once. My conclusion, after a couple of months of use, is that, while the ad contains a bit of hyperbole, *Calligrapher* is certainly an excellent word processor, and perhaps the premier one for the Atari.

CodeHead Technologies distributes two versions of this program, *Calligrapher Professional*, which I have and am reviewing; and *Calligrapher Gold*, which has additional features such as a thesaurus, grammar checker, automatic indexing, and automatic save. The program comes on four disks.

The version that you purchase is copy protected, and won't run without one of the original disks. However, when the registration card is returned to CodeHead Technologies, they send you a fifth disk, which contains an unprotected copy of *Calligrapher*, along with three new typefaces.

The basic program includes a dictionary; three typefaces plus one "font" of math symbols, and one of miscellaneous symbols; and about a dozen utility programs (e.g., a date setting program, a screen dump program, several GDOS utilities, an icon editor). It has an excellent 350-page manual.

Installation

For many Atari users, the bad news about *Calligrapher* will come early: It uses GDOS. However, *Calligrapher's* "Install" program makes GDOS use as painless as possible—and if you have the CodeHeads' *G+Plus*, the whole process should go smoothly. Basically, the install program writes an ASSIGN.SYS file to your root directory, puts a crippled copy of *G+Plus* called *G+CALLIG* in the AUTO folder, and another program called *LINE_ARC* to the AUTO folder.

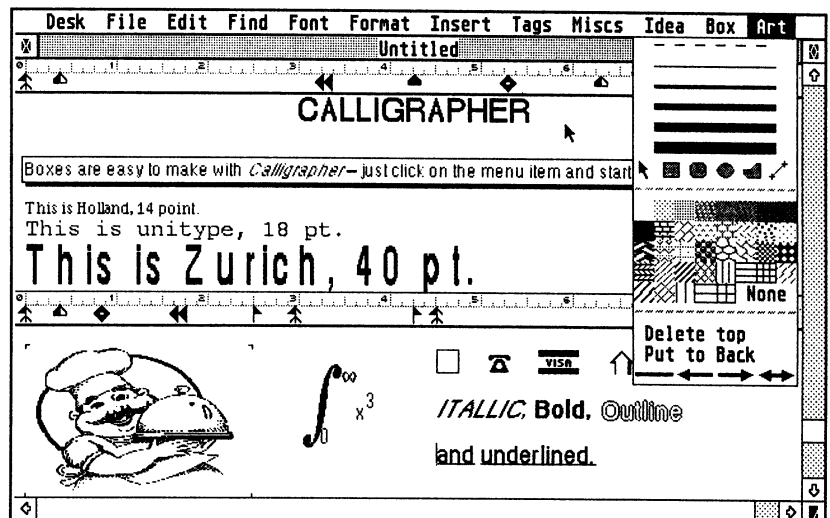
(*LINE_ARC* is a program required for printing the vector outline fonts.) Then, re-boot your computer and you are ready to go.

A problem arises only if you already have an ASSIGN.SYS in your root directory—the install program will overwrite it. If you use *G+Plus*, you need to delete the *G+CALLIG* file, and rename the ASSIGN.SYS file and move it to the directory with the rest of your assign files. I had no problem with installation; some people apparently do. There are a number of messages on Genie that deal with proper installation.

General Use

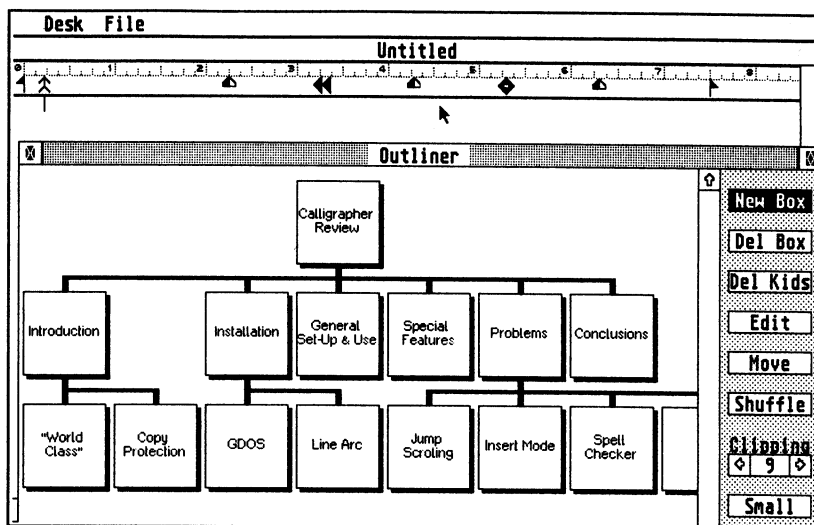
Calligrapher uses the standard GEM interface with drop down menus. Almost all of the menu selections have keyboard equivalents. All standard word processing functions such as block manipulation, search and replace, changing fonts, are well implemented and work smoothly.

General formatting is done with rulers or horizontal format lines. Every document has at least one ruler at the top of the first page. Additional rulers can be added anywhere in the text. The rulers are marked in inches (or centimeters—your choice) and correspond quite accurately to what is printed. Little icons on the rulers denote margins, line spacing, etc. To change the format, click on the icons and drag them to a new location—or completely off of the ruler



to delete them. Double click on a ruler and up pops a menu so additional icons can be added. The program can be set so that it either shows or hides the rulers.

Formatting changes within a document are easily handled by inserting a new ruler with the appropriate characteristics. Features such as multiple columns, changing from ragged edge to right justify, are easily done with the rulers. At any point in a document it is only necessary to insert a new ruler with the appropriate characteristics, and the text is formatted accordingly. Once I got used to this system, I found it extremely easy to use.



Special Features

Calligrapher has a number of special features that tend to separate it from other Atari word processors. One of the more interesting is the use of paks or special small programs which can be loaded whenever needed. The program comes with several paks, and certainly one of the drawing points of *Calligrapher* is the belief that CodeHead Technologies will furnish additional paks to help their customers.

The furnished paks allow for import and export of ASCII, *1st Word Plus*, and .DIF documents, and DEGAS graphics.

Among the other features that help make *Calligrapher* a first-class word processor are:

- a formula function, which will turn written descriptions of formulae, or commands, into standard mathematical notation.
- A simple, straightforward way of putting text in boxes.
- Easy importation of graphics, and some rudimentary tools for drawing graphics in a document.
- A superb Help function. Press the [Help] key and an index appears on the screen. Click on the item that interests you, and a short explanation is given.
- "Chapters." Large documents can be broken into separate sections or chapters, which can then be worked on separately. *Calligrapher* manages the chapters as if they were one file, allowing for continuous page numbering and so on.
- Configurable, reassignable keyboard commands for most functions.
- An interesting outline feature. This feature allows for the generation of a graphical representation of a document via a structured tree of boxes. The outline is linked to the document, so that

rearranging the outline results in corresponding changes in the document itself.

Printing

With any GDOS system, printing can be a problem. Judging by the messages on Genie, *Calligrapher* is no exception. *Calligrapher* uses outline fonts; when it is time to print a document the *LINE.ARC* program makes certain that they are printed at the proper size, and with excellent quality. This can sometimes cause a small delay in the start of the printing. You must set *Calligrapher* for the paper size you are using, and tell the program what position on the paper you wish to print—e.g., centered top to bottom, left to right, or off set by what amount. On my Panasonic dot matrix, it has worked without problem, producing excellent quality print at a reasonable speed.

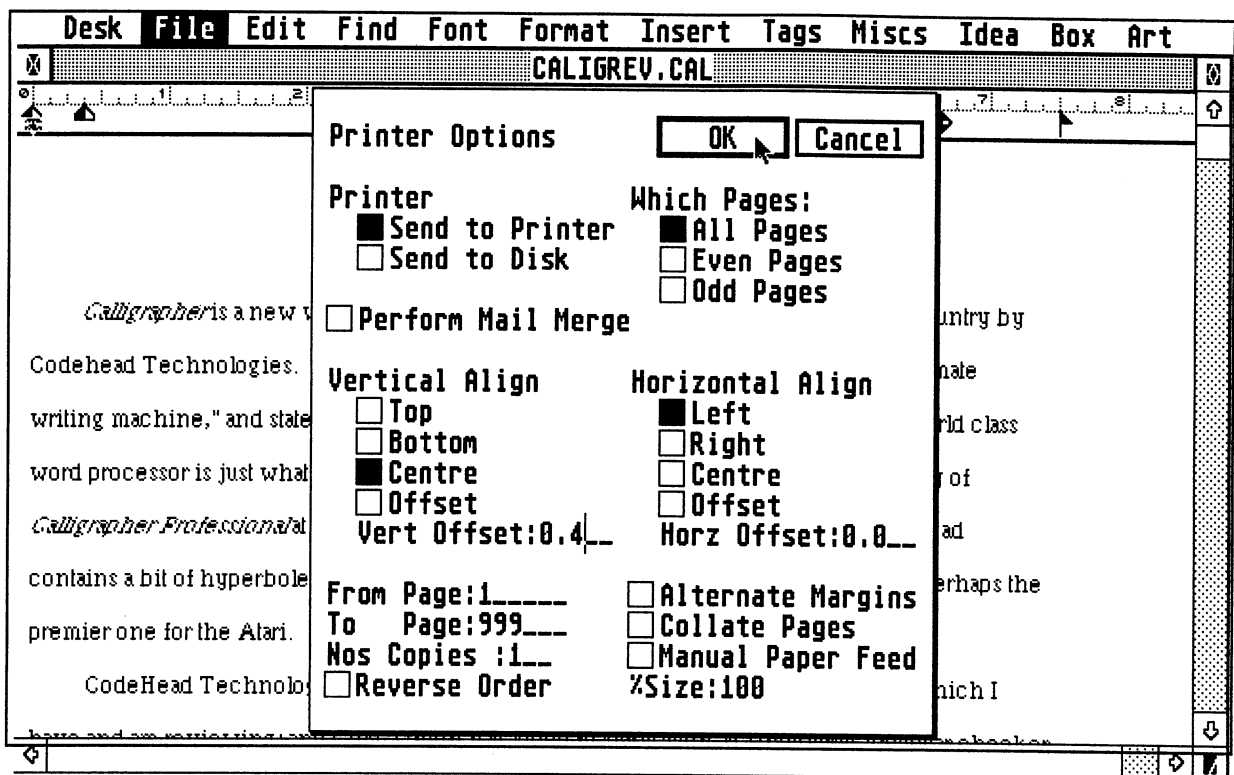
It also has a "text" mode, which displays text using the system font and allows for rapid printing with the printer's built in font.

Problems

Is *Calligrapher* a "world class" word processor? In a word, no. There are too many features that are not implemented, or are implemented poorly. The most important are:

(a) The spell checker. As presently implemented, it is almost unusable. First, it is slow. A document of a little over 3,000 words (and a dozen misspellings) took about 3 minutes 40 seconds to check. The same file checked with *Word Up* (on the same computer) took only a bit over 1 minute 30 seconds. And using a true world class word processor, *Word Perfect* on a clone, the file was checked in less than a minute.

Secondly, the spell checker often tags correctly spelled words as incorrectly spelled. Here are some of the words that *Calligrapher* said were misspelled: centimeters, math, wouldn't, haven't, gotten, isn't,



fulfill, labor, honor. According to CodeHead Technologies, a new American dictionary, which will end the spelling problems, will be forthcoming. I doubt that anything can be done about the speed of the checker.

(b) Endnotes. Not with *Calligrapher*—it will do footnotes, but not endnotes.

(c) A typeover mode. Continuing in the *Word Up* tradition, you can only insert new text, not type over old text. The explanation, I suppose, is that with a WYSIWYG word processor, and proportional fonts, the insert mode is too difficult to implement. Fair enough. But why can't this feature be available when using the "text mode" and no graphics?

(d) No smooth scrolling. As you move down in a document, rather than the text scrolling smoothly up the page, it jumps up. That is, when you move the cursor down from the bottom line on a page, the text on the bottom half of the screen moves up to the top half of the screen, leaving the bottom half of the screen blank for a second before it is filled with new text. When you are editing at the bottom of the screen, and want to move down one line, this is extremely irritating. Let me add that this is not a slow process: you can scroll through a document very quickly, especially with *Warp 9*. (Scrolling from top to bottom of a 1,300 word document took less than 25 seconds; jumping from top to bottom, about 2 seconds.) But it is not smooth scrolling.

The slowness of the screen refresh also shows up in other ways: When typing at a moderate speed, the display sometimes can't keep up and the first part of a line stays blank until there is a pause in keyboard

input. There are similar delays when deleting text from or adding text to the middle of a line.

(e) Two other minor irritants with *Calligrapher*: It does not have macros, and it will not do a table of contents.

Conclusions

Calligrapher is a welcome addition to the library of Atari programs. In addition to being an excellent word processor, with numerous features, it will have CodeHead Technologies to support it. Although they didn't write the program, and apparently do not have access to the code, they are there when you need them to give technical advice, answer questions, and help with problems. If you have always been disappointed in the word processors you have had to use with your Atari, you should give *Calligrapher* serious consideration. An excellent demo version is available on the Genie and in the CN library (#702D).

[*Calligrapher Professional*, CodeHead Technologies, P. O. Box 74090, Los Angeles, CA 90004.]

Calligrapher Demo CN Library #702D.

This is a demo version of *Calligrapher*, the ultimate writing machine from CodeHead Technologies and Working Title US! Disk contains everything you need to quickly set up the demo, including an example document that will take you on a tour of some of *Calligrapher's* many powerful features. \$4.00, CN Library, 122 N Johnson Rd, Sterling VA 20164.

The wait is over.

Calligrapher

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Welcome to the CIS
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is now beginning...

(September 8, 1992)

Sysop Ron Luks: Welcome to tonight's online Conference... With special guest, Bill Rehbock, director of software development and head of FALCON development. Tonight's CO will be in a moderated format. To get "in line" to ask a question just type /QUE. Now, without any further ado here's tonight's guest, Bill Rehbock. Okay, Bill, get on the hotseat.

Bill Rehbock (BR): Thank you Ron. I am happy to be here on Compuserve tonight. Things have settled down since the Dusseldorf Atari Messe. The Atari Falcon030 has been well-received by the European press and production Developer pre-production machines have been replaced with production machines and application development is speeding up. I also have good news regarding Atari Falcon030 FCC testing. The Falcon has passed FCC Class B specifications and we are waiting only for paperwork certification. Richard Miller, our VP of R&D is here, too, and he and I will be happy to answer questions regarding the Atari Falcon030, MultiTOS, and FSMGDOS tonight. Fire away!

Pattie @ AIM: Bill, how is the schedule for Falcon's release going? Originally, there was word that fairly large numbers would be available in the fall. Is that still true or is the rumor that we will see only limited quantities till the new year true?

BR: Pattie, we are still on schedule and believe that the quantities will ramp up as the end of the year draws near. The initial quantities will continue to go to Europe until we have the FCC Certificate in our hands which should still be at the end of October. I am still very optimistic about the production schedule.

Sysop Ron Luks: Bill, give us an approximate number. After you get FCC papers in hand. How many Falcons will ship to the USA? (This year.)

BR: Ron, we are discussing quantities right now with the U.S. sales department. From the looks of it, I (in software development) am confident we will be able to satisfy the initial needs between October and Christmas.

Alan Page: I have been using MultiTOS (as part of the beta test) for several months now on a MegaSTe. I find it very usable on that machine. I was quite disappointed to read conference transcripts stating that MultiTOS was not going to be available. I have been using MultiTOS on a MegaSTe for a while. It is quite good, so I was disappointed to hear that it would not be available for the 68000 machines. It would greatly enhance the market for MultiTOS-friendly software. What is the reason for this decision and is it cast in concrete?

BR: It is definitely NOT cast in concrete. Many of the developers have found MultiTOS surprisingly useful even on 8MHz Stacys. The reasoning is due to the large benefit of memory protection.

Alan Page: I urge you to consider making it generally available.

BR: I understand. Thanks.

Chris Dammers: Okay, will MultiTOS be compatible with all existing software, to your knowledge? And will there be any major advertising in Europe?

BR: Chris, MultiTOS is extremely compatible with existing GEM Applications. It is even friendly with TOS and TTP apps by opening TTY windows for them to run in automatically. I do expect the European Business Units to promote the Falcon heavily, both through PR and marketing.

Beth Jane Freeman: Can you use peripherals from the ST, like the monitor, external ICD HD & floppy with the Falcon030? I like the idea of the 1.44 drive for drive A. It's much better than a minimum 360k or even a 720k. Good idea!!

BR: The Atari Falcon030 will accept any of the following monitors: SM124 (or equivalent), SC1224/1435 (or equivalent), or any VGA monitor. You can also connect TV. Hard drives are a little trickier. We removed the ACSI DMA connector in favor of SCSI II, which is much more reliable and the up-to-date standard. You can connect most old hard drives by bypassing the host. There are several 3rd party developers working on SCSI II to ACSI adapters to allow direct connection of SLM Laser Printers and unmodified HDs. We removed the ACSI DMA connector in favor of SCSI II, which is much more reliable and the up-to-date standard. You can connect most old hard drives by bypassing the host...You can connect most old hard drives by bypassing the host adapter, which any dealer should easily be able to do for you.

Sam Rapp: Will it take a can opener to get into the Falcon (metal shields, Tabs, lots of screws.) Or is it easy access? How'd you guys get it through, no... Let me restate that. Is the Falcon030 easy access, or do you have to take out 800 screws and bend 400 tabs and light a few sticks of dynamite to get to the processor slot, memory stuff, and Hard drive? Also, how'd you get through FCC so quick? Thanks.

BR: As a past dealer/VAR, I can empathize with the can opener thing. The shielding has been completely redesigned so that all that is needed is a #1 & #2 Phillips screwdriver. The shielding is easily removed to allow addition of larger HDs, memory boards, or expansion boards. The first pre-production machines went through FCC testing as a "dry run" to find exactly where the quirks would be. The production rev motherboards were engineered and sent to FCC as the first units came off the line. You can tell that we've become very intense on the FCC thing.

Pattie @ AIM: I understand that you might not be able to tell us every detail, but what are Atari's plans to market the Falcon, especially those plans geared to bringing in New Users?

BR: Step 1. Take good care of existing users. Step 2. Promote the product through PR and specific market area advertising in conjunction with dealers to make it easy for existing users to evangelize Falcon030 to their friends. We need to get the word out so that people have heard about the machine before going into an Atari dealer or seeing one at a friend's house.

Chris Dammers @ STF: Seeing as the specs of the Falcon seem Formidable, have you any plans to do more arcade conversions as well as Steel Talons? If so, could you give us their details, as well as Steel Talons'?

BR: We are working with many of the entertainment houses, the bulk of which do their 68000 (Atari, Mac, and Amiga) development in Europe. I believe that we will see many strong titles being developed quickly. (Produced both by Atari and 3rd parties.)

mERCURY mAX: Are a/d and d/a converters; if so, what did I read that the Falcon has 8 track hard disk recording.

BR: The Falcon030 has built-in 16-bit ADC's and DAC's that will allow sampling at rates up to 50KHz. We plan to have a very simple-to-use Stereo direct-to-disk recording and edit system shipping with the machines. To do full 8 track (4 Stereo) recording and editing, you do have to add an external box (several are in the works by 3rd parties) with the additional DACs/ADCs in it. This box would also have the crystal necessary to do sampling at 44.1 and 48 KHz sampling rates.

Bill Aycock: Will Falcon TOS and/or MultiTOS allow a NEWDESK.INF file to be larger than 8192 bytes? I could only customize my STe halfway because I exceeded the size limit! Also, will the Falcon have a fan built-in?

BR: Yes, with the Hard Drive, DSP, and RAM, a small internal fan was necessary. The Limit on NEWDESK.INF has been lifted as of MultiTOS.

Sysop Ron Luks: Bill, before we go on to the next question, could you please describe the difference between Falcon TOS, MultiTOS and tell us what will ship with the first batch of Falcons? (Difference between Falcon TOS and TOS 2.06, I mean.)

BR: "Falcon TOS" has already shipped with the first batch of Falcons. It has support for all of the DSP, Sound DMA, and other new Falcon hardware, as well as O/S support for hierarchical menus, pop-up menus, 3D Window and Dialog objects, and full-color animated icons. MultiTOS adds all of the pre-emptive multitasking features on top of that, as well as extended interprocess communication and loadable file systems. The VDI in "Falcon TOS" has the necessary support for the new video modes, including overlay.

Alan Page: If I have a video camera, what sort of hardware do I need to do video overlay (with genlock) on the Falcon. e.g. video titling. Is it plug and play right out of the box, or do I have to wait for the usual 3rd party developers? Seems you are relying an awful lot on 3rd party and external hardware. Also, can it overlay both RGB and composite video?

BR: I would say that we are trying to leave the market open for 3rd party development. The box for doing overlay and genlock is relatively simple. It needs to extract the external sync from your external video source, inject it into the external sync input on the 19-pin video connector, and output either Falcon video or external video, depending on the state of the overlay pin on the connector. It can overlay RGB or composite.

Sam Rapp: Ok, a few more questions; 1: Can video modes be switched without rebooting? (Can I have a "base" boot resolution and let the software pick its own modes?) 2: Can you elaborate on Animated Icons? 3: What other software will ship with Falcon (Basic)? 4: How can I get system docs on the Falcon without spending major bucks to register as a developer?

BR: Software can make a new set resolution call that will put the machine in the requested video mode. The AES will be unavailable in this mode, but the application will have full VDI support. This is primarily for games and paint and animation packages that will want to run their interface in the current user-chosen res, but be able to render or output in say, 384x480 overscanned true color with overlay. The preview could be displayed in a 16-color desktop window, but the application would do a `wind_update` and go to the desired mode for final output. It would return to the user's mode afterward and release `wind_update`. This works with MultiTOS very well.

Color Icons allow multiple color resolution icons to be carried in a resource file in both non-selected and selected states. When you select an icon, it will flip to the other image, giving an animated effect. *Calappt*, a Personal Information Manager that has the ability to import and export delimited file formats as well as Portfolio databases will ship with F030. *Procalc*, which many of you may be familiar with, as well as a *True-Color Breakout* with digitized sound and a game called *Landmines*. The real neat stuff is the System Audio Manager, which allows you to record your own sounds to replace any or all keyclicks, or accompany the various AES events, such as window openings and closings, the file selector, etc..

There is also the Direct-to-disk recorder that I previously mentioned. We are also shipping a *Talking Clock* with the machine. BTW, the external hardware issues have been dictated primarily by the potential quality required by a set of users. (95% of users are not going to need 8 DACs/ADCs) and the quality requirements for the Video will vary greatly between consumers and professionals.

Bill Aycock: Will the Atari HD utilities ship with Falcons that don't include a hard disk?

BR: Bill, I think they'll be included in the box (I am not sure) but they have always been posted online and available to dealers. Because of the external SCSI situation, we will make sure that the utilities are readily available.

George C.: Will MultiTos ship with the first batch of Falcons to the US?

BR: Yes, it should. ...with the exception of developer units which will ship between now and October. MultiTOS will be softloaded for them.

Sysop Ron Luks: Okay. Thanks to Bill Rehbock and everyone who showed up to this CO. I apologize for the sluggish system response. However, if we can twist Bill's arm to return again later this fall, I promise a faster system. Thanks all. The CO is officially ended.

Atari Industry News and Announcements

The LINK™

ICD, Incorporated, a leading designer and manufacturer of hardware enhancements for Atari computers, has announced The Link, a highly integrated external SCSI host adapter for all Atari ST computers.

The Link allows Atari owners even more flexibility in their choice of hard drives. The Link is an external SCSI host adapter designed to plug into a standard 50 pin centronics style SCSI connector. In an attractively—designed molded case measuring just 2.5 inches by 3 inches and less than .75 inches thick (63x76x19 mm), The Link will fit into most any SCSI environment. The Link is powered by the termination line of the target SCSI device and will support up to 8 SCSI devices. This allows the use of external SCSI drives originally designed for the Apple Macintosh, IBM PC, Commodore Amiga, NeXT, Atari TT and Falcon, or most other standard SCSI drives with Atari ST, STE, Stacy, and STBOOK computers. Just plug and go. Since most drives require no modifications, The Link won't affect the drive manufacturer's warranty.

The Link, along with ICD's highly acclaimed software, also gives multi—platform computer owners unprecedented flexibility. If the SCSI drive is formatted under MS—DOS with FDISK, the user can directly read and write files from Atari computers under TOS using the ICD driver, IBM PCs running PC—DOS or MS—DOS, and Amiga computers running AmigaDOS 2.1 or later using the integral CrossDOS utility.

Thomas Harker, president of ICD, explained, "This is a real breakthrough in SCSI support for Atari ST computers. Not only is this a great value in hardware connectivity, but the software that comes with it is unbeatable. CD—ROMs are now supported! Since The Link supports extended SCSI commands we wrote MetaDOSdrivers to support the SCSI—2 standard for CD—ROM players. Floptical drives are now fully supported! With the Insite Floptical drive you can read and write IBM—compatible floppy disks at 720K, 1.4Mb, and 21Mb configurations on your Atari ST computer. Magneto—optical drives are also supported! We now support virtually all R/W optical drives in the 3.5 and 5.25 inch formats."

The ICD Link is competitively priced and will be premiered at the Atari Messe in Duesseldorf, Germany in August. The Link comes with a full one year warranty.

For further information, contact Thomas Harker at ICD in the United States by phone (815) 968—2228 extension 120 or fax (815) 968—6888. ICD, Incorporated, 1220 Rock Street, Rockford, IL 61101.

ORA Announces Diamond Edge and Ultimate Virus Killer

Oregon Research Associates is proud to announce the addition of two new programs to our line of quality Atari ST

software: *Diamond Edge* and *The Ultimate Virus Killer*.

Diamond Edge. Under continual development for two years, *Diamond Edge* represents our unwavering commitment to provide the Atari ST community with the highest quality software and product support available for any computer. *Diamond Edge* provides the most advanced set of Disk Management tools available for the Atari ST:

Disk Diagnostics: Analyzes your disks for critical errors that could lead to data loss. Complete reporting of all errors found and the affected files. Assess media integrity and map bad sectors. Assess the integrity of data on your disk with CRC and checksum validations.

Optimization: Improves disk access. Defragments files and directories, consolidates free space and optimizes data locations to improve disk performance. FAST disk optimization for reading or writing. Analyzes disk fragmentation level to assess disk performance.

Repair: Repairs damaged disk structure, damaged files, and maps bad sectors. Save, restore, edit critical disk information to restore even very badly damaged disks or recover crashed disks. Assessment and validation of the integrity of the recovered information.

Data Recovery: The Complete Undelete. The Diamond Mirror system automatically saves critical disk information that allows you to recover deleted files. Even undelete fragmented files and subdirectories. Validate the integrity of the undeleted file. Identifies and recovers data from lost clusters and unzero's disks.

General Disk Management: A wide variety of powerful disk management and information tools are available, including hard disk partitioning, copying, zeroing, wiping, etc.

Diamond Edge defines the new state of the art in disk management, diagnostics, repair, optimization, and data recovery software for the Atari ST and is accompanied by a comprehensive spiral bound manual.

Ultimate Virus Killer. There are nearly 70 types of virus prevalent on the Atari ST. With this package you can detect, destroy, and protect yourself from virus infection by all known and even unknown viruses.

Scans disks and memory for suspicious system activity. Detects even unknown viruses and calculates a viral contamination probability. Immunizes your disks against future virus attacks. 67 Viruses recognized, immunized, and destroyed. Including the dreaded "link viruses" that attach themselves to every program that runs and can destroy all your data.

Over 1000 executable boot sectors explicitly recognized and nearly 500 repairable. Regularly update to guarantee the best possible virus protection possible. The *Ultimate Virus Killer* is the ULTIMATE tool to protect your Atari ST from virus infection and is accompanied by a comprehensive printed manual..

Diamond Edge is available for the introductory price of only \$69.95. Existing *Diamond Back II* owners should contact us for a special limited time offer. The *Ultimate Virus Killer* is available for the introductory price of only \$29.95.

Additional information can be obtained by contacting us at: Oregon Research Associates, 16200 S.W. Pacific Hwy., Suite 162, Tigard, OR 97224. Phone: (503) 620-4919; FAX: (503) 639-6182; Genie mail: ORA.TECH. Check, Money Order, COD, or VISA/MasterCard accepted. When ordering, please be sure to include \$5 for shipping and handling.

DC Announces Storm

Alan Page, the author of the best selling, most popular terminal software ever written for the Atari computer, the original Flash!, has devised and produced the next-generation of telecommunications for you, *Storm*.

Storm is the next step for telecommunications as only Alan Page can produce. His expertise and mastery of programming is sure to set a new standard by which all other terminal software will be measured. And only Double Click Software can bring this delight to you.

Here are some of the features of *STORM*:

- o Works on all versions of TOS in all resolutions except LOW. Including the TT and the new Falcon.
- o BASIC script language. That's right! No new programmer's idea of a script language that is sort of like some programming language. This one is BASIC, with powerful extensions for telecommunications.
- o 100% MultiTOS compatible.
- o Everything is in a window: terminal screen, capture buffers, editors, BASICs, download/upload status, dialing status.
- o Unlimited editor and capture buffers, and BASICs (under MultiTOS)
- o Simple, yet powerful editor with full mouse control, cut and paste, full word wrap, Atari clipboard support, and more.
- o Capture buffer keeps capturing even if you are not in the terminal window. This means you can start your capture, and view it at your leisure without losing anything, without being in the terminal window. Heck, you can even close the terminal window! You can also freeze the current capture buffer and start a new one at any time.
- o Multitasking - be online downloading, editing and running a BASIC program all at the same time. In fact, you can start a new copy of BASIC at any time (without MultiTOS, with MultiTOS it's better yet!).
- o Powerful macro keys let you interpret the macro instructions as BASIC commands. You can even chain function keys, which can start a new copy of BASIC. You can even define the cursor keys!
- o Full type ahead support, with special prefix and suffix extensions, and control character pass through.
- o Simple layered Windows(tm) style menus which greatly simplify keystroke memorization for quick, easy, expert command execution.

- o Pop-up menus (with a pop-up menu command in BASIC so you can define your own as well).
- o Loadable background file transfers in X,Y,Z,modem and CompuServe's B+.
- o Background round-robin dialing with auto-logon BASIC scripts. And the size of your dial directory is completely unlimited!
- o Precise terminal emulations including Vidtex and VT100.

STORM will make landfall on December 7, 1992 and will have a special introductory price of \$59.95 until December 31, 1992. You can order your copy today, and get it before it hits the stores! On January 1, 1993 the price goes up to \$74.95. We accept cash, checks, money orders, MasterCard and VISA. Outside the US orders: NO PERSONAL CHECKS. Include \$3 for shipping anywhere in the world (special offer only). Include \$10 for overnight shipping in North America (special offer only). Double Click Software, PO Box 741206, Houston, Texas 77274-1206. Phone: (713) 977-6520.

DragonWare Releases PowerDOS as Freeware

DragonWare Software is proud to announce the freeware release of Chris Latham's *PowerDOS* - a powerful multitasking operating system that runs on the TOS series of computers from Atari Corp.

PowerDOS represents over four years of intense study and development efforts to create a powerful, fast, and yet a compatible multitasking replacement of Atari's GEMDOS level system software. *PowerDOS* redefines what your Atari ST, Mega ST, Stacy, STc, Mega STc, TT and Falcon computer can do.

PowerDOS handles every application call made to GEMDOS with routines written in 100% assembly language. Call-for-call, *PowerDOS* is many times faster than GEMDOS in reading and writing data to devices.

PowerDOS also provides the ability to switch between tasks hundreds of times per second. Up to 256 tasks can run at once. *PowerDOS* manages the distribution of time via priority levels for individual tasks that can be set and changed so that more important tasks get a bigger slice of the pie.

PowerDOS, however, isn't a magical multiple-GEM window multitasker. Why? *PowerDOS* places compatibility over bells-and-whistles. To maintain the fullest possible compatibility with the existing base of TOS platform applications, *PowerDOS* adheres strongly to the GEMDOS set of rules. What that means is that programs that aren't written to take advantage of *PowerDOS* multitasking (or interprocess communication or memory management) won't multitask easily. These programs aren't aware of the advantages of *PowerDOS* - but if made aware, they can easily multitask, and significantly increase user productivity.

All legal TOS programs will run under *PowerDOS* - and will enjoy *PowerDOS*'s lightning fast device I/O - but unless programs are written with *PowerDOS*'s extensions in mind, the ability to multitask will be limited.

Programmers: *PowerDOS* adds dozens of system calls to the GEMDOS series. These calls allow programmers to easily set up interprocess communication (Subscribe-and-Pub-

lish!), to restrict and manage memory use, to monitor the status of any task running under *PowerDOS*, to spawn off child processes, and most importantly to add new device drivers and commands to *PowerDOS* — making *PowerDOS* infinitely expandable. To make your programs work with *PowerDOS*, contact Christopher Roberts at DragonWare Software, and ask for a PowerDOS Developers Kit.

Non-Programmers: The real beauty of *PowerDOS* is that it is totally transparent to the user. A user simply installs *PowerDOS* in the AUTO folder and realizes a tremendous increase in device I/O speed. Life is better.

More advanced users can take advantage of setting up alias drives, adding pipes, naming serial ports, and using any of the number of *PowerDOS* utilities now available and those still under development.

With the advent of Atari's new Falcon computer, the market for TOS based hardware and software is ready to grow. We at DragonWare are ready to help supply TOS users with the tools to properly utilize their machines, and we can think of no other tool that could revolutionize the way that owners use their machines than *PowerDOS*. Hence, we have decided to make *PowerDOS* a freeware product. While all copyrights to *PowerDOS* are retained by PowerPoint Software, *PowerDOS* itself may be freely distributed.

For inquiries: DragonWare Software, P.O. Box 1719, Havre, MT 59501-1719. (408) 265-9609; GENic: DRAGONWARE. *PowerDOS* and *PowerNet* are copyright © 1992, PowerPoint Software, manufactured and distributed under license by DragonWare Software Inc.

LEXICOR Becomes Silicon Graphics Iris Vendor

This is to clarify a rumor regarding Lexicor expansion. "For the record," Lexicor has become a Silicon Graphics Iris independent vendor under the Iris partners program. This means that Lexicor is licensed to port its *Phase-4* software products to the Silicon graphics platform. Lexicor is also authorized to sell Silicon graphics hardware and software directly. This is with and without Lexicor software applications. Lexicor has already set up a Silicon graphics and DSP development team and begun the porting of *Phase-4*.

Lexicor will continue to support the ATARI computer at the present time. Lexicor has no current plans to abandon the Atari or its users.

Lexicor is moving forward with its 15/24 Bit true color applications and hopes to have software ready to support these color environments as soon as they become available, as third party products and/or as native hardware. Lexicor plans direct compatibility between its high-end product line and the ATARI wherever practical.

Lee Seiler, Vice President

GFA-BASIC Programming Toolkit

Taylor Ridge Books has announced the release of The GFA-BASIC Toolkit, Volume 1, which contains a wealth of programming routines for GFA-BASIC programmers. Written by John Hutchinson of Fair Dinkum Technologies, The

GFA BASIC Toolkit provides novice to intermediate programmers with over 50 useful routines they can plug directly into their programs. Whether the programmer needs to unravel the mysteries of file handling or just wants to add digitized sounds to his program, the Toolkit offers a treasure chest of routines for making programs more professional.

Included in this volume are routines to load and save picture files, flip screens, clip graphic elements from a screen, display graphics with various video effects, play both regular sounds and digitized sound, control a blitter chip, and much more. Even advanced programmers are likely to find some helpful gems tucked away within its pages. Priced at \$34.95 plus \$3 P&H (\$4 outside the U.S.), The GFA-BASIC Toolkit comes with a complete manual and a disk that includes an extensive sample program, as well as all the routines in the book.

The GFA-BASIC Toolkit may be ordered with check or money order from Taylor Ridge Books, P.O. Box 78, Manchester, CT 06045-0078. Books may also be purchased with Visa or MasterCard, by calling (203) 643-9673, or via electronic mail on Delphi, CompuServe, or GENic, at the e-mail addresses ANALOG4, 70303,3633, and C.WALNUM1, respectively.

DMC to Market INVISION Elite

INVISION Elite is a program which allows you to create sophisticated black and white raster images. Stretch! Skew! Bend! Rotate! Thin! Thicken! Copy! Outline! Anything you want! If you can think of it, *INVISION Elite* can probably do it. Using images that you create in the program, or ones from other sources, you can manipulate your graphics in a hands-on manner to achieve stunning visuals. *INVISION Elite's* easy-to-use processing features give you limitless possibilities. Try it and you'll probably surprise yourself!

In addition to standard paint program features, (paint, draw, copy, paste, etc.) *INVISION* has many features that make it indispensable to anyone serious about creativity and irresistible to anyone who likes to have fun while working.

INVISION Elite is a fully GEM-based program featuring a slick and surprisingly simple icon interface. It supports up to seven images, each in its own window, with image size limited only by memory. *INVISION* is full of powerful functions including: Gradient fill, Image Bending, Bezier Curves, Outlining, Smoothing, Rotation, Skewing, Mirroring, Atari Clipboard Support, Instant access panning, and much more. This is a very slick, powerful, and fun-to-use program. It requires a monochrome monitor and is compatible with large screen monitors.

The release date for *INVISION Elite* is September 17, 1992. The Suggested retail price is US \$129.95, \$149.95 Canadian. For further information, please contact: Nathan Potechin, DMC Publishing, Inc., 2800 John Street, Unit #10, Markham, Ontario Canada L3R 0E2.. Tel: (416)479-1880; Fax: (416)479-1882; CIS: 76004,2246; GENic: ISD; Delphi: ISDMARKETING.

The Purple Mountain Freedom Floptical Drive

Bellevue, WA (September 18, 1992). Purple Mountain Computers announces the availability of their new Freedom Floptical Drive, which can take the place of hard drives or removable cartridge drives (like the Syquest). The Freedom Floptical Drive (TM) is a 21 MB floptical 3.5 inch disk drive for Atari ST computers. You can store 21 megabytes on each rugged and portable diskette, and the media is fully removable.

Here's the scoop on the Freedom Drive:

- * includes FREE 21 MB floptical disk
- * includes newest version (currently 6.0.0) of ICD software
- * just plug it in, includes ICD Link adaptor, case, and power supply
- * reads 1.44 MB and 720K disks (2 to 3 times faster than ST floppies!)
- * takes up very little space (4.7 x 7.8 x 2 inches)

The price? An incredible \$399. Complete. Ready to go. You WILL NOT get a better price than this anywhere. This is an introductory special and the price WILL go up (we think that will be sometime in October). There is a warranty, and we guarantee that the drive will work on your ST system. Questions? Call or write us.

We stand behind the Freedom Drive with full tech support. We also have an electric adaptor that makes it compatible with international currents. Floptical diskettes are \$24.95 each in two packs (if you purchase a Freedom Drive from us), and \$29.95 each for users who do not purchase the Freedom Floptical Drive. Shipping in the United States is via Federal Express Insured and is \$15. Contact us for shipping costs outside the US.

Purple Mountain Computers, Inc., 15600 NE 8th St. Ste. A3-412, Bellevue, WA 98008. Phone: 206-747-1519; (GFenic: PMC.INC, CompuServe: 72567, 302).

Wintertree Announces Spelling Sentry

Wintertree Software Inc. is proud to announce the release of a new product for Atari ST/TT computers: *Spelling Sentry*—a desk accessory that adds a spell-checking capability to virtually any other GEM program.

Spelling Sentry can check spelling in various ways; it can also expand abbreviations. Since *Spelling Sentry* is a desk accessory, it's instantly accessible from your favorite word processor, text editor, communications program, or DTP application.

A key feature of *Spelling Sentry* is its ability to detect spelling errors in real time while you type using other programs, such as word processors. If you type a word containing a spelling error, *Spelling Sentry* sounds a tone and flashes the screen. Then, with a single mouse-click, you can select the correct spelling from one of the alternatives that *Spelling Sentry* suggests. *Spelling Sentry* will automatically replace the misspelled word with the correct one.

Spelling Sentry can also check ASCII files and word-processor documents. Since *Spelling Sentry* runs as a desk accessory, you can save a file from a text editor or word processor, then invoke *Spelling Sentry's* check-file feature to look

for spelling errors. *Spelling Sentry* can correct misspelled words in the file interactively. When it finds a misspelled word, *Spelling Sentry* presents a set of alternative spellings. You can select the correct spelling using the keyboard or mouse, and *Spelling Sentry* will correct the word in the file. *Spelling Sentry* can even correct subsequent occurrences of the misspelled word.

Besides being a spelling checker, *Spelling Sentry* can also expand abbreviations while you type. For example, when you type your initials, *Spelling Sentry* can replace them with your full name. You can teach *Spelling Sentry* abbreviations for words and phrases you use frequently, such as your return address, telephone number, and "boilerplate" text in business correspondence. Programmers can define abbreviations for language constructs and function calls.

For a spelling checker to be useful, it must have a large dictionary so it doesn't mistakenly report unknown words as misspelled. *Spelling Sentry* uses two dictionaries. The main dictionary contains over 100,000 words, including contractions, many proper names, and words spelled according to both American and British rules. The main dictionary is organized in segments that can be loaded from disk to memory as needed. This makes *Spelling Sentry* adaptable to the capabilities of your system. If your computer has a modest memory capacity, *Spelling Sentry* will keep most of its main dictionary on disk, loading segments as it needs them. If you have 380K of spare memory, *Spelling Sentry* will load the entire main dictionary into memory, either all at once or segment-by-segment, for maximum speed.

The user dictionary holds words you use that aren't in the main dictionary. Such words may include your last name, street names, city name, business's name, and so on. The user dictionary is accessed very quickly, and never needs indexing or reformatting.

Spelling Sentry was designed to work on the entire line of Atari ST-compatible computers, from the 520ST with 512K of memory to the TT030 with 4Mb+. The only special requirement for *Spelling Sentry* is a double-sided disk drive.

The *Spelling Sentry* package also includes an anagram solver and a word-guessing game based on "Hangman." The anagram solver determines which words can be derived from different arrangements of a string of letters, and is useful for solving jumble puzzles or anagrams. The anagram solver can also be used to create new anagrams. The hangman game sharpens your vocabulary as you try to guess the letters forming a word chosen at random from one of the 100,000 words in *Spelling Sentry's* dictionary.

Spelling Sentry is developed and published by Wintertree Software Inc. Wintertree Software was incorporated in January 1992. Prior to then, it was Phil Comeau Software. Wintertree Software also publishes *GramSlam*, a grammar checker, and *Grammar Expert*, a grammar reference.

Spelling Sentry's list price is \$59.95 US. *Spelling Sentry* is available wherever Atari computer products are sold. It is also available directly from Wintertree. Wintertree Software Inc., 43 Ructer St., Nepean, Ontario, Canada K2J 3Z9. Phone: (613) 825-6271.

ST NEWS Announced!

Purple Mountain Computers, a full service Atari dealer, has released a newsletter/newspaper called *ST News*. Included is an interview with the Codeheads, information and dates about upcoming shows, a story on ICD's new Link, as well as excellent bargains on recycled software and hardware for the ST, cutting edge new software such as *MacSFE*, *Diamond Edge*, tremendous discounts on other software such as the budget desktop publisher *Easy Text Plus* for just \$29.95 (the lowest price anywhere for a commercial Desktop Publishing program). *ST News* is FREE. Just send us e-mail on GENic to: PMC.INC or to 72567,302 on CompuServe. Or write to us, FAX/call us at 206-747-1519. Do anything, just get us your name and address and we'll send you a copy! Purple Mountain Computers, Inc., 15600 NE 8th St. Ste. A3-412, Bellevue, WA 98008.

CodeHead Announces Warp 9 V3.71 with Extend-O-Save, the Modular Screensaver!

One of the most popular utility/entertainment programs in the Mac and PC worlds right now is *After Dark* (tm), a "screensaver" that is infinitely expandable through external modules. Now, CodeHead Technologies ups the Fun Quotient in the Atari world with Extend-O-Save, the modular screensaver in the new version of *Warp 9*! No longer do you have to put up with the same dull screensaver graphics day after day—with Extend-O-Save the possibilities are almost limitless. (Flying toasters, anyone?)

Warp 9 now comes with 5 screensaver modules (maybe more by the time you read this). The method for writing modules will be freely distributed, so any programmer will be able to write new modules at will.

Some of the features of *Warp 9* w/Extend-O-Save include:

- o Move the mouse into a corner of the screen to automatically start the screensaver, or move it to another corner to prevent the screensaver from kicking in. (And you can tell it which corners you want to use.)
- o Pick the types of events that will prevent the screensaver from kicking in (such as modem or MIDI input, or GEM graphics and text), and automatically control the screensaver for individual programs.
- o Select any time-out interval from 1 to 99 minutes. (The time-out is the amount of time Extend-O-Save will wait before activating the screensaver.)

In addition to Extend-O-Save, the new version of *Warp 9* has some other major enhancements:

- o *PinHead* is now built into *Warp 9*, so you can remove one more program from your AUTO folder. Full automatic control of the 'fastload' effect for specific programs is included, just as it was in *PinHead*.
- o Automatic loading of specific fonts and desktop pictures for each program you run.
- o A revamped *Warp 9* Control Panel, with new controls, and an improved Save Config option.

And of course, *Warp 9* still has the screen acceleration and other great features (like custom fonts and desktop pic-

tures) that have made it the most popular and most compatible software accelerator ever for Atari computers.

To upgrade from any previous version of *Warp 9* to the new Extend-O-Save version, just send us your original *Warp 9* master disk and a check for \$15.00 (includes postage and handling). When you mail us the disk, there's no need for a special envelope or disk mailer; simply put it in a normal letter-sized envelope and drop it in the mailbox.

If you own any version of *Quick ST* or *Turbo ST*, you can upgrade to *Warp 9* for just \$30.00 by sending us your original disk and a check. (The previous limited \$20 upgrade offer has been extended at this new price.)

The retail price of *Warp 9* is \$44.95. CodeHead Technologies, P.O. Box 74090, Los Angeles, CA 90004. Phone: (213) 386-5735 (Mon-Fri 9A-1P Pacific Time); FAX: (213) 386-5789; BBS: (213) 461-2095.

Straight Edge Announces OutBurST!

Straight Edge Software has announced the release of *OutBurST!*, a printout speedup utility that will allow your ST, STc, or TT to drive your printer to its maximum possible output speed. *OutBurST!* comes with high speed printer patches for the built-in Atari TOS printer driver and the *Pagestream* printer driver.

With *OutBurST!* installed on a standard 8 MHz ST, printout time can be reduced by a factor of over 19 relative to the standard TOS routines (26.5 seconds for *OutBurST!* vs. 520 seconds for TOS with *Pagestream* using an HP LaserJet IIIP). All printers that are connected to the standard parallel printer port are compatible with *OutBurST!* but it will be most effective when being used with high speed printers such as HP LaserJet and Deskjet compatible printers. The largest improvements will be seen when using programs that use graphical output such as *Pagestream* and all GDOS-based applications.

A demo version is available on GENic and other BBS/on-line services and the author can be reached on GENic as F.PAWLOWSKI.

List Price: *OutBurST!*, \$20 plus \$2 S&H. Straight Edge Software, PO Box 6407, Nashua NH 03061-6407.

Revision 6.20 of The Sales-Pro System

Hi-Tech Advisers is proud to announce the immediate availability of our new Version 6.2 of the popular Sales-Pro Point-of-Sale / Inventory Control / Accounting Software System. This new version is available for PCs, PC LANs, and Atari TOS Computers. Updates are available for current registered program users.

A few new features found in version 6.20:

- * A new default setting has been added which allows the user to choose whether or not to charge for Back-Ordered items. (Module #1 Required)
- * Lists of Back-Ordered items now include whether or not the items have been paid for.
- * The user can now choose whether the Inventory Item ID or the Inventory Item Name is displayed on Customer History Lists.

- * A few minor fixes have also been added.
- * Several Cosmetic and Speed Enhancements have been made to improve overall system performance.

The features listed above have been added to the Sales-Pro Series since version 6.10. Contact your local dealer, consultant or Hi-Tech Advisers today for more information.

Accessory #5, "Recall a Sale Transaction," is now available for the Sales-Pro and SalePoint Series. This new accessory allows the user to Recall a previous Sale Transaction, Edit Items or Add Items to that Transaction or process it exactly as before as a New Transaction. This new accessory is available to current Sales-Pro users for a retail of \$39 Single User or \$69 Multi-User. Accessory #5 is now included in the Super Sales-Pro package.

Hi-Tech Advisers, PO Box 128, Ravna, NY 12143-0128. To Order call 1-800-882-4310; outside the US, call (518) 756-3800. FAX: (518) 756-3539; Tech Support: (518) 756-6666; Other Inquiries: (518) 756-3800.

Barefoot to Support Hybrid Arts Owners

As Hybrid Arts software owners are probably aware, Hybrid Arts, Inc. is no longer selling, supporting, upgrading or manufacturing any of their software line. However, the really good news is that Barefoot Software Inc. has obtained the exclusive rights, from each of the independent developers, to support, upgrade, sell and manufacture the following products:

- * **SmpteTrack/EditTrack** (Platinum version available in 60 days). We currently sell *SmpteTrack Gold* and the *Smpte-Mate*. Stefan Daystrom is working night and day to complete this exciting new release. Call us for a more detailed explanation.
- * **GenEdit** - 2.0 available now, plus lots of new Templates.
- * **Hybriswitch** - Upgrade will include compatibility with the TT.
- * *MidiPlexers*, *SmpteMates*, *EZ Score+*, *Ludwig*, *DX* and *CZ Android*, *Oasis ST*, and *MidiMaze*. In other words, the entire product line.

Barefoot's support hours have been expanded to 9:00 am - 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday; however, knowing the hours of the working musician, we try to be available beyond the regular support times for emergency situations. Our phone number is 818-727-7143, FAX 818-727-0632. Also the Barefoot MIDI World BBS number is 818-996-7659.

Barefoot Software Inc., 19865 Covello Street, Canoga Park, CA 91306.

E.Z. Arithmetic

E.Z. Arithmetic[™] is a series of twelve modules developed by Raymond La Barbera covering whole numbers, whole number bases, fractions, decimals, measurements, percents, and integers.

These modules are designed to make it easy for grade school students, junior high school students, high school students, college students, parents and adults to learn, relearn, review, or drill all aspects of arithmetic. They can be used in elementary and junior high school arithmetic courses, as part

of high school and college remedial math courses and as personal private tutors for self-study. *E.Z. Arithmetic* can help in getting higher grades in all arithmetic courses and standardized tests (such as the SAT, ACT, RCT, and GED), in preparing for math and science courses and in becoming more effective at solving every-day arithmetic problems.

Each one of the 12 *E.Z. Arithmetic* modules lists for \$49.95 and thoroughly covers a particular area of arithmetic. Each module consists of a printed manual and disk-based software. The manual contains all the study hints, terminology, definitions, concepts, methods, model problems and exercises necessary to master that module's topics. The software provides an endless number of drill problems for practice and reinforcement and is quite easy to use and user friendly.

Each module of *E.Z. Arithmetic* is available for the Amiga computer, the Apple II computer, the Atari ST, STe, or TT computer (medium or high resolution), the HP 95LX palm-top, the HP 48 SX and HP 48S calculators, the IBM or any compatible computer (any graphics card), the Macintosh computer and the TI-85 calculator. The computer versions run in monochrome or color, do not require a hard drive, mouse, printer or memory expansion, and work with all graphic cards.

Here is a list of the titles of the *E.Z. Arithmetic* modules: 1) Whole number basics; 2) Whole number operations; 3) Whole number base basics; 4) Whole number base operations; 5) Fraction basics; 6) Fraction operations; 7) Decimal basics; 8) Decimal operations; 9) Measurements; 10) Percent basics; 11) Percent problems; and 12) Integers.

E.Z. Arithmetic is published by the E.Z. Software Company, P.O. Box 500, Midwood Station, Brooklyn, NY 11230.

Elfin Magics' Tinker Board

Looking for a memory upgrade that won't downgrade your wallet? Elfin Magics' new Tinker Board is a tiny, 4 Meg memory upgrade for your 1040/520ST, available now for only \$189.95, including all memory! This device uses SIMM memory modules and is designed to fit within the SHIFTER RF shield of your ST. All SIMM modules are surface mount soldered to the board, for high reliability. Some soldering skill is required.

For more information, please write to Elfin Magic, 23 Brook Place, E., Islip NY 11730. (516) 581-7657.

DAK's FREE Computer Club

Now you can fight back against outrageously overpriced software. And, grab top-rated, name-brand PC programs at slashed-to-the-bone, lower-than-ever-the-lowest-discount-store price. How? It's easy. Simply join DAK's FREE Computer Users' Club.

Here's the deal. As a member of DAK's FREE Club, you'll be eligible to receive special offers for top programs for some of the biggest names in the industry for literally pennies on the dollar.

In fact, as a premium to tempt you into joining, I'm offering you SoftKey's superb *KeyPublisher* desktop publishing program for the industry-rocking price of just \$9.90. You

read it right. You get a top-drawer, blue-blooded desktop publishing program for less than \$10. Wow!

(Editors Note: *KeyPublisher* is virtually identical to *Publish It 1.2*, which Atari users will immediately recognize as the familiar *Publisher ST*, originally from Timeworks. For PC owners with *Publisher ST* on their Atari, this program would be the very same thing on their PC. BTW, the software offered by DAK will be for IBM PCs and clones. — JW)

And, that's just the beginning. Once you join, I'm going to flood you with more incredible hardware and software deals than you've ever seen. So, if you're sick and tired of paying outrageously inflated software prices, join DAK's FREE Computer User's Club and start saving BIG on top, name-brand software today.

Write to: DAK Industries, Inc., ATTN: Computer Users' Club, 8200 Remment Ave., Canoga Park, CA 91304. Enclose \$9.90 plus \$4.50 S&H if you would like the 100% complete *KeyPublisher* Desktop Publishing Program. For faster service call toll-free 1-800-325-0800.

Fair Dinkum Announces CyberDrome

Fair Dinkum Technologies is proud to announce the immediate availability of *CyberDrome—The Hoverjet Simulator*, a new 3-D Virtual Reality arcade simulation by RHEA-FX. Combining the realism of a real-time flight simulator with arcade action and the problem solving and exploration of a dungeon type game, *CyberDrome* offers single player or a unique 2-player / 2-computer mode using a serial cable or two modems. Multiple level missions allow for novice to advanced pilot training plus a special training mission for beginning pilots. Also included is a special 2-player Head-to-Head competition mode to increase players' skills as Hoverjet pilots. Six mission levels are included, but additional mission disks and "Memory Mine" maps will soon be available for extended play. Versions for the IBM PC and Commodore Amiga are also under development, which will be link-compatible with the 2-player / 2-computer Atari ST/STe version. "When your nightmares become your reality, try telling yourself... it's only a game!"

One Mb RAM and color monitor required. \$39.95 plus \$2 S&H from Fair Dinkum Technologies, PO Box 2, Los Alamos, NM 87544. Phone (505) 662-7236.

STYLE: Image File Manipulator

Zocra technologies announces *Style: The Atari ST/STe/TT Image File Manipulator* (a "big brother" for our file viewer *STipple*). *Style* is a program for viewing, manipulating, translating and saving graphic images on the Atari ST, STe and TT series computers. *Style* supports a wide variety of graphic image file formats ranging from computer dependant formats such as NEO, Degas and MacPaint to hardware independent formats such as GIF, TIFF, EPSF and CP8.

Style allows your ST to manipulate graphics created on a PC, an Amiga, or whatever, even if the original image has more colors or pixels than the ST can display. For example, a 256 color image can be loaded, clipped, rotated and saved without any loss of color information even on a monochrome

ST. Likewise *Style* will load and manipulate any ST graphic in any resolution. It also allows you to convert your Atari ST images into other formats such as GIF, PCX and TIFF for exchange with other systems.

Style has a rich rendering feature which allows an image to be drawn using an arbitrary number of colors and using an arbitrary color palette. The rendering includes both gray scale and color dithering. Color dithering can even be performed using the color palette from another image.

Style is GEM-based and operates in all ST, STe and TT resolutions. When an image is loaded it is stored in memory in full detail, and an on-screen version (a raster) is rendered for display purposes. The on-screen version is a quick rendering that uses the colors available in the current resolution. Each image in memory is represented by its on-screen version (its raster), which appears in its own scrollable window. The rasters can also be displayed full screen.

All images can be clipped, scaled, rotated, flipped and rendered for any target resolution or machine. The number of bit planes used to store the image in can be adjusted and the colors used can be remapped to remove voids in the color table. Color images can be converted to gray-scale. Gray scale images can also be softened, sharpened, scaled using interpolation, and have their gray values redistributed by scaling or normalization.

Both the image and its on-screen raster can be saved in a variety of Atari and non-Atari formats. For a demonstration of *Style* look for STYDEMO on your favorite BBS. STYDEMO is a trimmed down version of *Style* which will let you try out most of *Style*'s features.

Style 1.0—The Atari ST/STe/TT Image File Manipulator, \$35.905 US / \$42.95 CDN. Zocra Technologies, 4-319 MacKay St., Ottawa, Ont. K1M 2B7 CANADA.

JMG Announces HyperLink Runtime Package

JMG Software announced the worldwide release of the *HyperLINK Runtime Package* at the Glendale Atari Show on September 12th. JMG is making the *HyperLINK Runtime Package* available at NO CHARGE, allowing it to be freely distributed by Users Groups, Electronic Services such as GENIC, and to be freely copied by individual users.

HyperLINK is a multi-purpose product, the leading "Application Generator" product for the Atari ST line. The most common use of *HyperLINK* is in database-oriented applications, where users can design custom forms, reports, graphical screens, and also combine text, graphics, and other types of media with the more common database files.

HyperLINK contains a full dBASE III/IV compatible database handler that supports multiple index files and multiple field types (date / numeric / text / logical / etc.), and also a multiple-window text editor, an IMG file displayer, and a basic control / command set. All these features can be combined using "links" to create fully hypertext-based multimedia applications if the user so desires.

The *HyperLINK Runtime Package* allows any ST owner to immediately begin to use any pre-built *HyperLINK* application with NO RESTRICTIONS. While the full commercial

version of *HyperLINK* is required to create and modify applications and reports layouts, the *Runtime Package* can run any standard *HyperLINK* database/text/graphics/report applications previously created.

Since *HyperLINK* allows database applications to be designed visually and operated under a full GEM and Windowing environment, it is far superior to text-based applications such as *DBMAN* or limited list-based databases such as *Data Manager* or *SuperBase*. With all ST owners now able to access existing *HyperLINK* applications and databases without any additional purchase, we expect *HyperLINK* to become a standard for exchanging databases and multi-media applications. Numerous new applications will be uploaded directly by JMG in the next few weeks, as well as many expected by the hundreds of *HyperLINK* owners already designing and using their own applications.

The full *HyperLINK* package, with Application Builder, Report Generator, and additional modules, sells for \$149 US and is available through Atari dealers or directly from JMG Software.

For more information on *HyperLINK*, the new *HyperLINK Runtime Package*, or other details, please contact JMG Software, 892 Upper James Street, Hamilton, ONT L9C 3A5 Canada. Phone: 416-575-3201; Fax: 416-575-0283; BBS: 416-389-9064; GENic JMGSOFT

[The *HyperLINK Runtime Package* and another disk of *HyperLINK* applications were introduced into the CN PD Library this month. -JW]

WP Trade-Up Is Back

Many customers who have called with this request will be happy to know that a competitive trade-up to *WordPerfect 5.1* for DOS and *WordPerfect 5.1* for Windows will be available between September 1 and December 31, 1992. Customers who own a competitive DOS or Windows word processing package with a suggested retail price of at least \$395 (US)/\$479 (CAN) can trade up to either *WP5.1 DOS* or *WP5.1 Win*. The suggested retail price for the competitive trade-up is \$129 (US)/\$155 (CAN). The trade-up will be available through resellers or from WPCorp (make sure they know this is for the competitive upgrade offer).

Also, for you orphaned Non-IBM/Mac users, *WordPerfect* is offering a Cross-Platform Trade-Up for Amiga/Apple/Atari. Between July 1, 1992 and June 30, 1993, *WordPerfect* for Amiga, Apple, or Atari customers can trade up to *WordPerfect for DOS*, *Windows*, or *Macintosh* for \$150 (US)/\$179 (CAN), or to *LetterPerfect* for DOS or Macintosh for \$89 (US)/\$110 (CAN). Customers are required to relinquish their original Amiga/Apple/Atari license number in writing and provide proof of ownership (such as original diskettes or certificate of license). Customers interested in this offer should call Angie Williams at (801)222-2034, or they can write to: WordPerfect Corporation, Attn: Angie Williams, Mail Stop J190, 1555 N. Technology Way, Orem, UT 84057.

GEMvelope

Synergy Resources is proud to announce the release of a new version of *GEMvelope!* the envelope printer. Finally, quick and easy printing of envelopes on your printer! *GEMvelope* allows you to print envelopes on almost any printer. Laser (and most other) printers will not feed an envelope so that you may print across it. *GEMvelope* solves this problem allowing you to print even legal size envelopes on virtually all laser printers and dot matrix printers, including the HP DeskJet. *GEMvelope* was developed to work hand in hand with most word processors and data bases to provide a complete solution. This latest version (2.9) continues to expand and refine a product which has been continuously upgraded and supported over the past two years.

GEMvelope Features:

- o Import allows extracting an address from a letter in almost any word processor format (or from the GEM/Atari clipboard).
- o Mail merge/browse allows printing one or many envelopes with an address imported from a database file such as Cardfile or Tracker/ST. (Database import is fully user-definable.)
- o ** NEW! ** Special HP DeskJet support!
- o Adjustable positioning for different size envelopes.
- o Load-able and save-able addresses and configuration.
- o POSTNET bar code printing for speeding your mail. (Will also save two cents per letter in the future according to the US Post Office!)
- o ** NEW! ** A new text line is available and is placed at the bottom left of an envelope. This is for adding messages like "Attention: John Doe" or "Personal & Confidential".
- o ** NEW! ** The program version runs in a window and supports a menu bar.
- o A desk accessory version ideal for using from within programs like Tracker/ST!
- o *GEMvelope* uses and includes GDOS and drivers for the following printers: Atari SLM804/605, HP LaserJet compatible, HP DeskJet, Epson FX80/LX compatible 9 pin, Epson/Panasonic compatible 24 pin, Star NX1000, Okimate 20.
- o Includes Swiss, Dutch and Typewriter fonts. Fully compatible with FSM and bitmapped GDOS fonts.
- o Compatible with all Atari ST and TT computers with 1 meg RAM. Atari SLM laser printers require 2 megs of RAM.

GEMvelope is designed to be used hand in hand with *Tracker/ST* as a complete solution. List price of *GEMvelope* is only \$30 and is available directly from Synergy Resources or your Atari dealer. (Dealer distribution is by Pacific Software.) Upgrades from version 2.0-2.1 is \$6. Upgrades from version 2.7 or greater is \$3. Send original disk to Synergy Resources for pgrades. Synergy Resources, 754 N. Bolton Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46219-5902. (317) 356-6946; GENic Address: R.RICHARDS2

ATARI VENDORS: Send your press release or new product announcements to CN NEWS, 122 N. Johnson Rd, Sterling VA 20164. Send E-mail to JOE.WATERS on GENic or 74005,1270 on CIS.

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1040ST System For Sale. Both monitors w/switch, Subra 20Meg, great shape, \$485. Canon PJ- 1080A color inkjet printer, switch box and 3 cables, works great, \$150. Call for software. Steve (301) 464-0835.

Pagestream V2.2, originals, \$100. Thomas M. Powell, Apartado 729, Oaxaca, Mexico, 68000.

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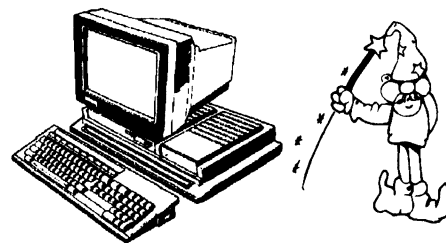
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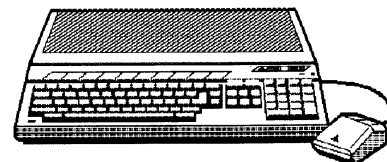


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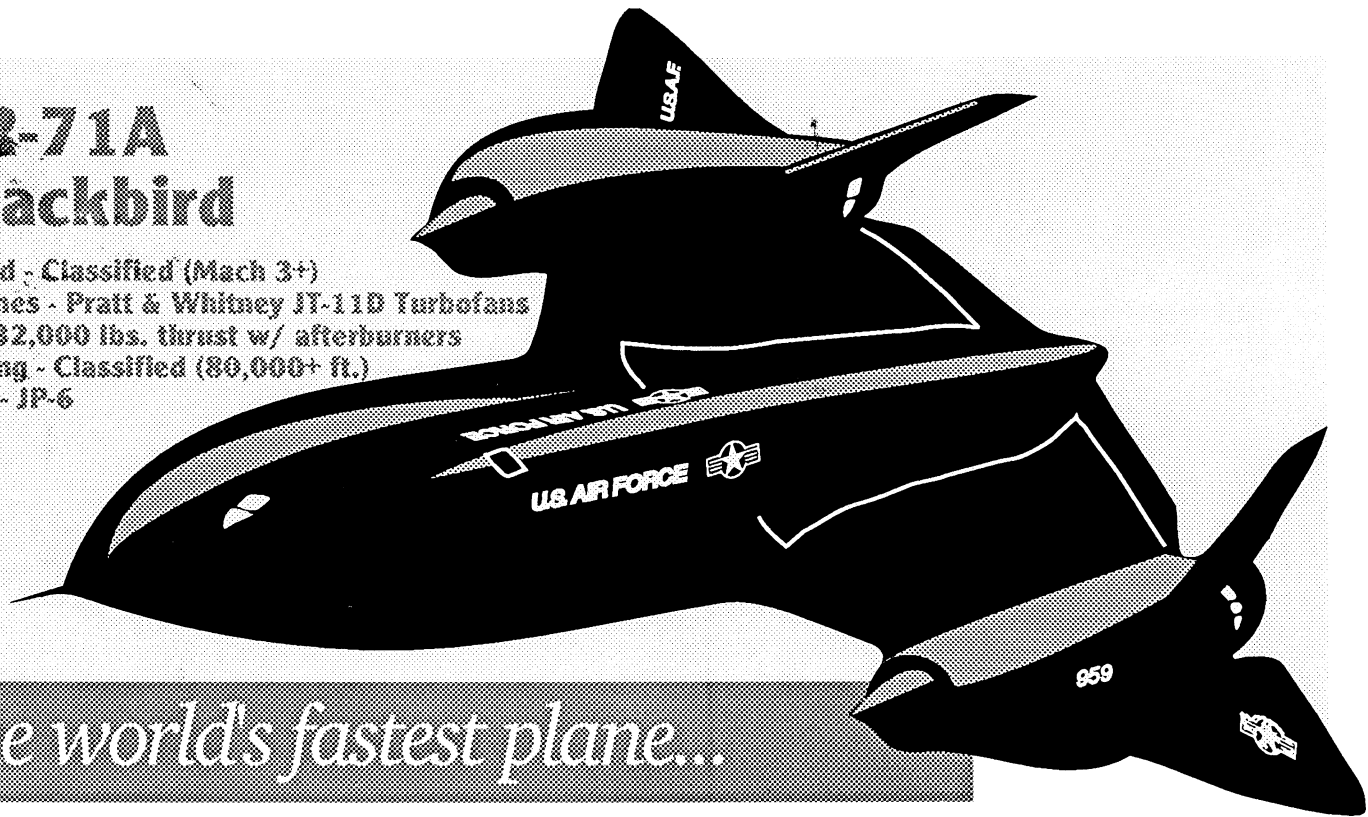
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68030 SST

Speed - 16 to 40 mhz asynchronous design; up to 12 times faster than a Mega ST
Engine - MC68030 Microprocessor with Caches and Burst Mode Afterburner
Ceiling - up to 12 Megabytes of RAM
Fuel - up to 8 Megabytes of 32 bit fastRAM in tandem w/ a 16, 33 or 40 mhz oscillator
Operating System - TOS 2.05 (Mega STe), with the new Atari desktop
Expansion - processor direct slot; Chromax Super Video board already "in rollout"
User Upgradeable - when ever you want to



Gadgets by Small SSTSSTSSTSST

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